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**‘The Only Friend I Have in This World’  
Ragged School Relationships in England and  
Scotland, 1844-1870**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses the experiences of ragged school pupils in England and Scotland between 1844 and 1870, focusing on the interaction between scholars and teachers and exploring the nature of the social relationships formed. Ragged schools provided free education to impoverished children in the mid-nineteenth century; by 1870 the London schools alone recorded an average attendance of 32,231 children. This thesis demonstrates the variety of interactions that took place both inside and outside the classroom, challenging simplistic interpretations of ragged school teachers as unwelcome intruders in poor children's lives. In analysing the movement in terms of the social relationships established, this thesis counters the dominant focus on the adult as actor and child as passive subject. Wherever possible the focal point of the analysis builds on the testimony of ragged school scholars, shifting emphasis away from the actions and words of adults in positions of authority towards those of the poor and marginalised children who were the subjects of intervention. By concentrating on the voices of those who received ragged schooling, this thesis highlights the diverse experiences of ragged school scholars and underscores their agency in either rejecting or engaging with teachers. As such, it demonstrates the integral contribution of children's testimonies when seeking to understand the impact of child-saving movements more generally.

This thesis contributes to understanding on a variety of broader topics. It highlights changing attitudes towards children, education, and the poor. Through focusing on juvenile testimonies it investigates how children responded to poverty, disability, philanthropic work, and the evangelical religious message that ragged schools conveyed. The impact of Victorian philanthropy and the nature of the cross-class relationships it fostered are explored, and the

significant contribution that women and working-class individuals made to such work is underscored. Finally, it sheds light on the experiences of working-class British emigrants, both their fortunes and their attachment to their homeland.

A rich array of sources is used, including ragged school magazines and pamphlets, committee minutes, and annual reports. In using promotional literature in combination with local school documents, the public portrayal of children and teachers is contrasted with that found in practice. Most significant, however, are the day to day exchanges between scholars and their teacher explored through a microhistory of Compton Place ragged school in North London. Using the journals the school's superintendent maintained between 1850 and 1867 alongside the 227 letters 57 former scholars sent him, this thesis pieces together a picture of the evolving and complex relationships forged. The journals and letters together enable an analysis that draws on the words of both ragged scholars and their teacher. Moreover, they provide rare access to how relationship developed over time and, in some cases, despite considerable geographical distance.

## **Lay Summary**

This thesis analyses the experiences of ragged school pupils in England and Scotland between 1844 and 1870, focusing on the interaction between scholars and teachers and exploring the nature of the social relationships formed. Ragged schools provided free education to impoverished children in the mid-nineteenth century; by 1870 the London schools alone recorded an average attendance of 32,231 children. This thesis demonstrates the variety of interactions that took place both inside and outside the classroom, challenging simplistic interpretations of ragged school teachers as unwelcome intruders in poor children's lives. In analysing the movement in terms of the social relationships established, this thesis counters the dominant focus on the adult as actor and child as passive subject. Wherever possible the focal point of the analysis builds on the testimony of ragged school scholars, shifting emphasis away from the actions and words of adults in positions of authority towards those of the poor and marginalised children who were the subjects of intervention. By concentrating on the voices of those who received ragged schooling, this thesis highlights the diverse experiences of ragged school scholars and underscores their agency in either rejecting or engaging with teachers. As such, it demonstrates the integral contribution of children's testimonies when seeking to understand the impact of child-saving movements more generally.

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## **Declaration**

I, Laura Mair, declare that I have composed this thesis myself. The work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree or professional qualification.

Edinburgh, 23 August 2016

Laura M. Mair,





## A Note on Conventions

All manuscripts are quoted verbatim throughout this thesis. Capitalisations, corrections, grammar, spelling, and underlining have been transcribed as closely as possible. The variations in scripts made transcribing challenging in some instances, particularly in the case of the Compton Place letters. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to retain the author's words wherever they are discernible. For this reason, '[sic]' is not used as it can be presumed that 'errors' within quotations reflect those present in the sources.

Names are given in full when a scholar is first referenced wherever a first name is known; in many cases only surnames were recorded. Following this, surnames are used to avoid confusion from the many shared first names; however, first names are used where siblings are referenced.

## Abbreviations Used

LRSU	London Ragged School Union
OCM	<i>Our Children's Magazine</i>
PP	Parliamentary Papers
RSSBS	Ragged School Shoeblack Society
RSUM	<i>Ragged School Union Magazine</i>



*'To My Dear Kind Mr Ware'*



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## Introduction

Charles Restieaux was one of the more troublesome scholars of Compton Place ragged school, London. In October 1851 his teacher, Mr Ware, recorded in his school journal that ‘Restieaux behaved very badly & came very irregularly to school’.<sup>1</sup> The following month Ware visited the boy’s mother ‘to blow up’ about his behaviour, something he rarely recorded doing. According to Ware, Restieaux’s mother ‘certainly bears up very ~~example~~ cheerfully’.<sup>2</sup> Thirteen years later, on 10 March 1864, Restieaux wrote to his former teacher upon thin, pink notepaper from Christchurch, New Zealand. In this, his nineteenth letter to Ware, Restieaux opened by noting the ‘shame on my part’ for not writing sooner. Restieaux’s ‘shame’ is made all the more poignant by his description of Ware as ‘the only friend I have ~~it~~ in this World’.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis is about the many poor children who gathered in make-shift classrooms in mid-nineteenth-century England and Scotland. Lofts, railways arches, and warehouses were transformed into schools for the unkempt and dirty children of the destitute and dubbed ‘ragged schools’. In these institutions children learned not only to read, write, and perform basic arithmetic, but about a God who loved them. Predominantly taught by volunteer teachers, deemed qualified by their evangelical fervour and Biblical knowledge, ragged schools quickly multiplied in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1864, the year that Restieaux referred to Ware as his ‘only friend’, ragged schools numbered 600 in London alone with an average attendance of 51,797.<sup>4</sup> Ragged schools were not confined to the metropolis, but were

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<sup>1</sup> Surrey History Centre (SHC) 1585/2, Ware’s School Journals, 13 October 1851.

<sup>2</sup> SHC 1585/2, 16 November 1851.

<sup>3</sup> SHC 1487/153/19, Letters from Former Scholars, 10 March 1864.

<sup>4</sup> ‘The Twentieth Anniversary of the Ragged School Union’, *Ragged School Union Magazine (RSUM)* (June 1864), p. 123.

established in the majority of urban centres in order to counter the seemingly connected problems of child poverty and juvenile delinquency.

The central aim of this thesis is to investigate the multifaceted and complex relationships that formed between impoverished children and ragged school teachers. This is done by focusing on the dialogue that scholars and teachers engaged in, both in school and in later years. The negotiated and evolving nature of the relationships between teacher and taught is highlighted, questioning traditional interpretations that cast the teacher as actor and scholar as passive subject. Whether the interaction between scholar and teacher was marked by affection, enmity, or indifference, the exchanges are nevertheless symptomatic of a relationship worthy of exploration. By investigating the roles teachers played in the lives of scholars and the ways scholars responded to and treated their teachers, both parties are focused on.

In examining the dialogue between scholars and teachers in combination with the experiences of children, this thesis not only sheds light on the ragged school movement's impact upon British society in the mid-nineteenth century, but on a number of other topics. The potentially devastating physical and emotional impact poverty could have upon children that is evident in ragged school sources contributes to current debates surrounding both poverty and the history of disability. Moreover, the letters of former scholars underscore the value their authors placed on literacy, as well as on the religious teaching they had received in the ragged school. More generally, this thesis contributes to broader debates about Victorian philanthropic action and the relationships it fostered as well as the experiences of working class emigrants and their enduring attachment to their homeland.

The presence of Charles Restieaux's words in the title of this thesis reflects my

intention to direct attention to the children who attended ragged schools. In contrast to the dominance of adult voices that have narrated the movement's history to this point, children's voices receive particular attention throughout this thesis. To this end, children's fragmented and intermittent testimonies are incorporated into the analysis wherever their words or emotions are discernible. Actions are interpreted tentatively; protestations and challenging behaviour are, in many cases, the only surviving evidence of the children's feelings. The children's testimonies give a rare insight into the diverse juvenile responses to the ragged schools, their teachers, and the education they offered. Nevertheless, children's voices are not concentrated on to the detriment of adult voices. Rather, by shifting focus to the hitherto dimmed voices of children, adult's voices are reinterpreted and re-evaluated in the understanding that they are one-half of a dialogue.

## **Historiography**

It is notable that it was childhood, rather than children, that first received attention from historians. Phillipe Ariès's argument in *Centuries of Childhood* that 'there was no place for childhood in the medieval world' resulted in significant scholarly debate.<sup>5</sup> Ariès's thesis pivoted upon the notion that childhood had a history; that beliefs about childhood had altered and evolved. Although Ariès's conclusions have been subjected to criticism from scholars such as Linda Pollock and Shulamith Shahar, who both highlighted the continuities in parenting and attitudes towards children, his legacy in directing historical attention to

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<sup>5</sup> Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (Suffolk: Peregrine Books, 1986), p. 31.

childhood endures.<sup>6</sup> Carolyn Steedman's much-cited *Strange Dislocations* is of particular significance on the topic of childhood. It is, she writes, a 'history of people's belief that there was such a thing as "childhood"'.<sup>7</sup> The weight increasingly attached to childhood between 1780 and 1930 is charted by Steedman, who argues that ideas about childhood became inextricably linked with ideas about the self. This is supported by Karen Sánchez-Eppler's more recent argument that in constructing childhood as 'a period of dependency', children 'matter then not as selves, but as stages in the process of making an adult identity – as if childhood could only be meaningful in retrospect'.<sup>8</sup> The perceived significance of childhood to adulthood – its role in forming identities and shaping characters – may explain why it has been subjected to such extensive historical investigation.

Stemming from this growing interest in childhood, the portrayal of children and, of especial relevance for this thesis, of poor children, has received considerable attention. Hugh Cunningham dedicates a chapter of *Children of the Poor* to the prominence and function of racialised and animalistic language in descriptions of street-children. Linda Mahood and Barbara Littlewood likewise discuss such terminology in their study of child-savers' portrayal of impoverished children in Scotland, as the ascription of 'indiscriminate signifiers of inferiority and otherness'.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Heather Shore's research on juvenile delinquency demonstrates that negative associations were attached to poor children. Shore asserts that

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<sup>6</sup> Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Mahood and Barbara Littlewood, 'The "Vicious" Girl and the "Street-Corner" Boy: Sexuality and the Gendered Delinquent in the Scottish Child-Saving Movement 1850-1940', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 4:4 (1994), 549-578 (p. 552).

street-children were ‘regarded as incapable of innocence’ and that there ‘was a casual assumption that these, the very poor of London, were corrupted from birth’.<sup>10</sup> Yet, the ambiguity that surrounded poor children has been firmly established by scholars of childhood. In reference to children more generally, Harry Hendrick has observed that child welfare policies were formed by the contrary notions of the child as both victim and threat.<sup>11</sup> With specific relation to poor children, Cunningham and Louise Jackson suggest that they were not bluntly designated evil; rather, they were paradoxically deemed simultaneously both innocent and dangerous.<sup>12</sup> This thesis contributes to the above scholarship by highlighting how such ambiguous attitudes towards children were manifested within the ragged school classroom. It draws attention to the conflicting and contrary views that adults could hold, as well as showing the challenges adults faced when seeking to reconcile the two opposing ideas.

Histories of childhood and of adult ideas about children are not, however, histories of children. When explaining his reasoning behind the title *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, Cunningham asserted the necessity of distinguishing ‘between children as human beings and childhood as a shifting set of ideas’.<sup>13</sup> In particular, he notes that it is ‘easier to write a history of childhood than of children’. Cunningham observes that ideas about ‘childhood in the past exist in plenitude; it is not so easy to find out about the lives of

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<sup>10</sup> Heather Shore, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth Century London* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debate* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003), pp. 7-17, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 106, Louise A. Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1995).p. 1.



children'.<sup>14</sup> The challenges historians face in accessing the experiences of children in the past are regularly cited. Pollock notes that research into the lives of past children 'involves relying on exceedingly problematic sources of evidence'. The study of children is, according to Pollock, 'an area beset with difficulties'.<sup>15</sup> Sánchez-Eppler expands on this, noting that 'what we know about nineteenth-century childhoods comes through objects produced by adults: school and other institutional records, child-rearing manuals, fiction, photographs, clothing, furniture, even toys'.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, when noting her intention to 'ask fundamental questions about who these children were' Shore acknowledges the challenges inevitably faced, writing that 'To even begin to think in these terms, to catch hold of some essence of past lives, is clearly dependent on the sources'. Despite such difficulties, Shore affirms that the voices of past children may still 'be teased out and captured'.<sup>17</sup> Her intention to 'humanise' the juvenile offenders that appear in institutional records, to 'let them tell their own story', has proven a source of inspiration for this thesis.<sup>18</sup> Like Shore, I intend to move away from the binary depictions of poor children that span child-saving discourse. This thesis focuses on what can be gleaned of the actual children who resided in the alleys, courts, and rookeries that ragged schools were designed to assist, rather than on their depiction.

Alison Light has recently drawn attention to the dearth of comprehensive histories of the working class, writing that there 'are still few histories of the working poor and even fewer in which they have names and faces, and stories to tell'.<sup>19</sup> If the stories of the working

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Pollock, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Sánchez-Eppler, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>17</sup> Shore, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 16, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family* (Stirlingshire: Penguin Books, 2015), p. xxii.

poor are neglected by historians, those of their children are more so. John Burnett, Anna Davin, and Jane Humphries remain the key historians to have explored the lived experiences of poor children. Using diaries and autobiographical accounts Burnett's *Destiny Obscure* explores the daily lives of working-class children from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth. Touching on the broad themes of childhood, education, and family life, Burnett paints a picture of the collective recollections of former working-class children. He argues against child-saving rhetoric, arguing that there is no evidence that poor families placed less value or invested less love in their children.<sup>20</sup> Burnett's conclusions are, he professes, limited by the preponderance of autobiographies from the 'respectable' working class, rather than the most destitute, and by the tendency of many to leave what he terms 'emotional gaps'.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, his work provides a significant contribution to understanding of past childhoods, drawing attention to the variation of experiences and the value of autobiographies as historical sources.

Davin's *Growing up Poor* investigates working-class childhoods in London between 1870 and 1914 through oral testimonies and school records and, like Burnett, focuses on home and school experiences. Davin comments on the 'gulf' between those whose views influenced the legislature and those who lived in poverty; her analysis draws on sources that give access to the 'daily detail of poor children's lives'.<sup>22</sup> Davin's intention to explore poor children's lives is certainly achieved, as her research provides a valuable insight into the worlds

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<sup>20</sup> John Burnett, *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education, and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 53.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing up Poor: Home, School and Street in London, 1870-1914* (London: River Oram Press, 1996), p. 8.

that urban working-class children inhabited. Like Burnett and Davin, Humphries draws on autobiographical material to explore the experiences of child workers in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. Critiquing the prevalent depiction of the ‘industrial revolution as heroic, masculine and progressive’, Humphries highlights the significant role children played by accessing their ‘unambiguous’ testimonies found in autobiographies.<sup>23</sup>

Together this scholarship has laid an important foundation for this thesis. In shifting the focus towards the lived experiences of children, these authors have opened new avenues for future research. Yet, Burnett, Davin, and Humphries draw substantially on memories of childhoods, whether from autobiographies or oral testimonies. Although the value of such material is skilfully demonstrated, the children’s ‘in the moment’ reactions and responses remain broadly inaccessible. Helen Rogers’s research on juvenile experiences of reading in prison is helpful here. Using the ‘Everyday Book’ of Sarah Martin, a Christian visitor to Great Yarmouth’s House of Correction, Rogers analyses the children’s responses to stories. She argues that ‘Martin’s journals provide a rare opportunity to gauge the immediate reactions’ of the children.<sup>24</sup> This thesis contributes to Rogers’s scholarship by sourcing the children’s feelings towards education through their, to employ Rogers’s term, ‘immediate’ words, emotions, and actions. More than this, it builds upon the research of Burnett, Davin, and Humphries by exploring the experiences of and responses to poverty found in children’s testimonies.

Historians have recently interrogated the problematic and simplistic casting of

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<sup>23</sup> Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 7, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Rogers, “‘Oh, What Beautiful Books!’: Captivated Reading in an Early Victorian Prison”, *Victorian Studies*, 55:1 (2012) 57-84 (p. 58).

children as passive victims. In *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* Jackson notes in the context of sexual abuse cases that children were portrayed as ‘a weak, passive victim rather than an active doer (of either right or wrong)’. They were, in Jackson’s words, ‘caught in a double bind of “littleness” and poverty’.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in their expansive study of child-rescue discourse, Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel argue that poor children were depicted as ‘worse than orphaned’, as highly vulnerable and in need of protection.<sup>26</sup> The supposed dependency of childhood and the repercussions this has in terms of agency has been critiqued and deconstructed by Sánchez-Eppler, who argues that childhood ‘is not only culturally, but also legally and biologically understood as a period of dependency, and hence it is easy to dismiss children as historical actors’. According to Sánchez-Eppler, the ‘very belief in children’s “specialness” – how as vulnerable, innocent, ignorant beings they require adult protection and training’ condemns childhood and children as ‘culturally irrelevant’.<sup>27</sup> The innocence attached to children not only absolves children of responsibility for their actions, it removes the ability to act at all.

Although Linda Gordon’s *Heroes of Their Own Lives* is primarily concerned with mothers, her intention to return agency to historical victims is highly pertinent to this thesis. In studying social work cases in Boston Gordon demonstrates that women exercised agency by seeking aid; they not only used the services available ‘but helped build them’.<sup>28</sup> Gordon’s stance is succinctly summarised in her statement that ‘the protagonists in this story are the

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<sup>25</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850-1915* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Sánchez-Eppler, p. xvi.

<sup>28</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (London: Virago Press, 1989) p. 296.

victims’.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the recent collection of essays on child labour in industrial England from Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman critiques the focus on ‘exploitation and victimhood’ that permeates older scholarship.<sup>30</sup> In line with Gordon, Goose and Honeyman argue that historians should recognise the active role children play in ‘the construction of their own lives’.<sup>31</sup> Like Gordon, they maintain that it is possible to access the testimonies of history’s ‘victims’, writing that the ‘voices of children in the past exist, but historians increasingly need to learn how to listen’.<sup>32</sup> This idea underpins this thesis; it has determined the sources focused on as well as those put aside. In concentrating on the words and actions of ragged school children, this thesis seeks to acknowledge both their voices and agency.

No history is as dominated by narratives of adult control and child passivity as that investigating nineteenth-century child-saving movements. The very term ‘child-savers’, popularised by Anthony Platt’s monograph of the same title, places emphasis on the adult doer at the expense of the child acted upon. Such histories are, for the most part, histories of things imposed on children by adults, whether ideas, identities, or situations. In his study of the juvenile court in Chicago, Platt argues that child-savers shaped the concept of delinquency and defined the behaviour deemed ‘deviant’. According to Platt, child-savers ‘brought attention to – and, in doing so, invented – new categories of youthful misbehaviour which had been hitherto unappreciated’.<sup>33</sup> Although he acknowledges the ‘benign motives’ of child-savers, which he claims were grounded in ideas of “purity”, “salvation”, “innocence”,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750-1914*, ed. by Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1969), p. 3.

“corruption”, and “protection”, Platt nevertheless claims that ‘the programs they enthusiastically supported diminished the civil liberties and privacy of youth’.<sup>34</sup> Mahood’s research on the child-saving movement in Scotland suggests that ideas about delinquency or inadequate parenting were subjected to the middle-class ideals of the child-savers themselves. Further, Mahood asserts that ‘since the late nineteenth century public interest in children has been the wedge used to prise open families’.<sup>35</sup> This thesis responds to the above scholarship, demonstrating that an approach that focuses only on the agency of ‘child-savers’ provides an account that is always partial or incomplete and has the effect of perpetuating the stereotype of poor children and families as passive objects of intervention. Moreover, it considers the extent to which the child-saving movement was ‘bottom up’ as well as ‘top down’, incorporating adult volunteers and staff from working-class backgrounds, and responding to the needs of working-class people as much as imposing values upon them.

Jackson has argued that the relationships formed between children and adults require further mining, asking ‘How were the different relationships of children and adults negotiated on a daily basis? In what circumstances did the close social proximity of children and adults lead, on the one hand, to affection and, on the other hand, abuse?’.<sup>36</sup> In relation to philanthropic work in Leeds Jackson criticises overtly negative interpretations of residential homes for destitute or orphaned children, writing that it is ‘inaccurate’ to depict them as ‘regimes of oppression and control’.<sup>37</sup> According to Jackson, ‘the emphasis on rescue and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>35</sup> Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family: Britain 1850-1940* (London: University College London Press, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> Jackson, ‘Children of the Streets: Rescue, Reform and the Family in Leeds, 1850-1914’, *Family and Community History*, 3:2 (2000), 135-145 (p.142).

reform as social control can be misleading because it reduces the different vocabularies to one very fixed and inflexible one'.<sup>38</sup> Instead, she draws attention to the diversity of experiences accessible through 'grass-roots level' studies.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, this thesis places a premium on sources from local schools that give access to the voices and experiences of children as well as of adults.

The ragged schools have received little attention from historians. They are commonly touched on, but rarely receive more than a brief mention. They are frequently referenced with brevity alongside an assortment of other institutions as an example of child-saving fervour; Davin lists the schools as one among many examples of increasing control over children.<sup>40</sup> Studies of education often confine the movement to a succinct reference. According to E. A. G. Clark, who was writing in 1969, ragged schools have become 'a myth in the history of education'.<sup>41</sup> W. B. Stephens's *Education in Britain* mentions the schools in its opening chapter, noting that 'The 1830s saw the beginnings of "ragged" or "industrial" schools, philanthropic endeavours aimed at saving vagrant and homeless children in urban slum districts from lives of crime'.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, Michael Sanderson's *Education, Economic Change and Society in England* notes that ragged schools 'took the poorest, vagabond children for a basic education' and were later absorbed by Board Schools following the 1870 Education Act.<sup>43</sup> Although Edward Royle's *Modern Britain* has a sizable chapter on education he does not mention ragged schools

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.135.

<sup>40</sup> Davin, p.5.

<sup>41</sup> E. A. G. Clark, 'The Early Ragged Schools and the Foundation of the Ragged School Union'. *Journal of Educational Administration History* 1:2 (1969), 9-21 (p. 9).

<sup>42</sup> W.B. Stephens, *Education in Britain 1750-1914* (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1998), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1780-1870* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 24.

by name; rather, he ambiguously refers to ‘charity schools’ and ‘religious schools’.<sup>44</sup> Thomas Laqueur’s authoritative study of Robert Raikes’s Sunday schools, *Religion and Respectability*, provides a thorough account of these institutions between 1780 and 1850.<sup>45</sup> Although Sunday schools played a significant role in shaping the early ragged school movement, Laqueur does not refer to them.

The ragged school movement is likewise mentioned in histories of the nineteenth-century church, particularly those concentrating on evangelicalism. Stewart J. Brown’s *Providence and Empire* mentions the schools in relation to Shaftesbury’s social action, as does Simon Heffer’s *High Minds*.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, biographies of Shaftesbury, such as those by Georgina Battiscombe and J.L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, discuss his work as the LRSU president.<sup>47</sup> Both Battiscombe and Hammond and Hammond relate Shaftesbury’s words that ‘If the Ragged School system were to fail [...] I should die of a broken heart’, aptly demonstrating his passion for the movement.<sup>48</sup> Kathleen Heasman’s *Evangelicals in Action* provides the most thorough account of the schools from an ecclesiastical perspective, dedicating a chapter to the movement and its achievements. Heasman traces the schools’ evolution following the Education Acts that has rarely been commented on, describing how

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<sup>44</sup> Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997* (London: Hodder Education, 2007), pp. 349-403.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850* (London: Yale University Press, 1976).

<sup>46</sup> Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1815-1914* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), p.163, Simon Heffer, *High Minds: The Victorians and the Birth of Modern Britain* (London: Windmill Books, 2014), pp. 76-79. Although Anthony-Ashley Cooper did not inherit the title of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury until 1851, he is referred to as ‘Shaftesbury’ throughout this thesis.

<sup>47</sup> Georgina Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: A Biography of the Seventh Earl 1801-1885* (London: Constable, 1974), Geoffrey Best, *Shaftesbury* (London: Batsford, 1964), J.L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *Lord Shaftesbury* (London: Constable, 1923), J. Wesley Bready, *Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Industrial Progress* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1926).

<sup>48</sup> Battiscombe, p.196, Hammond and Hammond, p.258.



the re-christened Shaftesbury Society moved to focus on ‘crippled’ children.<sup>49</sup> The schools are, however, notably absent from Owen Chadwick’s *The Victorian Church*; despite discussing the growing concerns about the religious instruction and education of poor children he does not touch on ragged schools.<sup>50</sup>

Published books entirely on the ragged schools are dominated by celebratory accounts produced at the close of the nineteenth century by individuals involved in the movement – which confined their source base to official LRSU material. Charles Montague’s *Sixty Years in Waifdom*, Rev. J. Reid Howatt’s *Then and Now*, and G. Pike’s *Pity for the Perishing* each convey accounts that faithfully reflect the LRSU’s narrative of its achievements.<sup>51</sup> In stark contrast with such accounts, Swain and Hillel have recently drawn on ragged school promotional literature alongside that of other child-saving groups when exploring ‘child rescue’ discourse and changing attitudes towards child migration.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, a number of local histories of ragged schools have been produced, such as Audrey Mitchell’s study of the Kelso ragged school and Wendy Prahms’s account of the Newcastle ragged and industrial schools.<sup>53</sup> Both Mitchell and Prahms draw on the sources preserved by individual schools, namely annual reports and committee minutes, thus moving away from promotional material.

Ragged schools have been the focus of a small number of unpublished theses and dissertations, as well as a handful of published articles. R. G. Bloomer’s thesis provides an

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<sup>49</sup> Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), pp. 86-87.

<sup>50</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part One 1829-1859* (London: SCM Press, 1987).

<sup>51</sup> Charles Montague, *Sixty Years in Waifdom, or, The Ragged School Movement in English History* (London: Woburn Books, 1904), J. Reid Howatt, *Then and Now: A Sketch of 50 Years’ Work by the Ragged School Union* (London: Ragged School Union Press, 1894), G. Holden Pike, *Pity for the Perishing* (London: Clarke & Co, 1884).

<sup>52</sup> Swain and Hillel.

<sup>53</sup> Audrey Mitchell, *Kelso’s Ragged School* (Kelso: Audrey Mitchell, 1991), Wendy Prahms, *Newcastle Ragged and Industrial School* (Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2006).

account of the ragged school movement in England and Scotland, with the second part focusing on the schools in the Lancashire area. In his preface Bloomer puts forward the eight questions he intends to address at both a national and local level, including ‘Who were the founders?’, ‘What were the aims?’, and ‘What children attended?’.<sup>54</sup> Bloomer’s thesis fails to explore the wider impact of the schools and his conclusion is restricted to a narrative of the schools’ aims and organisation. On the other hand, Derek Webster’s thesis methodically analyses annual reports and minute books from the Stockport school, providing an important insight into the structure of the institution.<sup>55</sup> More recently, Russell Grigg has explored Welsh ragged schools in an article on their development and growth.<sup>56</sup> Like Webster, Grigg focuses on the annual reports of individual schools, which he uses effectively to underscore the considerable educational achievements of the Welsh institutions. Finally, both Clark’s dissertation and his article published in the *Journal of Educational Administration and History* centre on the London ragged schools and draw predominantly on material published by the LRSU. Core to Clark’s argument is his belief that ‘There was not one ragged school movement, however, but several’. Clark asserts that ‘the London and Scottish schools had little in common except their name’.<sup>57</sup> This idea is disputed throughout this thesis, which highlights the common discourse that shaped the schools as well as the connections forged

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<sup>54</sup> R. G. Bloomer, ‘The Ragged School Movement before 1870, with Special Reference to Some Lancashire Ragged Schools’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1967). See also Gavin’s Master’s dissertation on the Scottish ragged schools which takes a similar approach to Bloomer. Alison Gavin, ‘The Origins, Emergence and Development of Ragged Schools in Scotland in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished Master’s thesis, University of Stirling, 1992).

<sup>55</sup> Derek Webster, ‘The Ragged School Movement and the Education of the Poor in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1973).

<sup>56</sup> Russell Grigg, ‘The Origins and Growth of Ragged Schools in Wales, 1847-c.1900’. *History of Education* 31:3 (2002), 227-243.

<sup>57</sup> Clark, ‘The Ragged School Union and the Education of the London Poor in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished Master’s thesis, University of London, 1967), pp. 8-9.

through the migration of both ideas and people.

Although many of the scholars noted above have sought to produce accounts of the schools independent of promotional literature, their use of annual reports and committee minutes nevertheless confines their analyses to the authoritative voices in the schools. Just as conclusions drawn from promotional literature rely on sources produced for the public, annual reports and committee minutes were similarly compiled with an audience in mind, be it a gathered room or local readership. Sources such as these grant valuable information on organisational matters, demonstrating, for instance, how schools both sourced and spent money. Nevertheless, they do not yield rich information on the dialogue between scholars and teachers. The teacher's voice may be heard, albeit in a public capacity, but the child's voice is absent. Further, despite the space given to case study material by Bloomer and Webster, little space is given to those working in or attending the schools. Neither explores the children's experiences beyond the schools' routines, while the dynamics between scholars and teachers are unmentioned. Although the teachers named within committee minutes are referenced, there is no evidence that either Bloomer or Webster attempted to investigate the individuals cited.

Clark, on the other hand, directly laments the limitations of his research. Within his conclusion he writes:

There are aspects of the dialogue between the zealots and their ragged pupils which are beyond the reach of the historian, who can gain a picture of timetables and techniques, of indiscipline and disturbances, of literary standards and future employment, but is inevitably shut out from the more personal aspects of the spiritual life of teachers and taught.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

In light of the recent scholarship on children cited earlier, and in particular Goose and Honeyman's claim that 'voices of children in the past exist, but historians increasingly need to learn how to listen', this thesis focuses on the dialogue between scholars and teachers that Clark has deemed 'beyond the reach of the historian'.<sup>59</sup> Clark closes his thesis referencing the passion of the teachers who met 'evening after evening, Sunday after Sunday'.<sup>60</sup> In this concluding remark Clark ends with his focus decidedly on the teachers rather than the taught, adults rather than children. By prioritising the children's experiences and testimonies and exploring their part in conversation with teachers, this thesis rectifies the emphasis on adults and teachers in existing scholarship.

## Methodology

The period 1844 to 1870 has been chosen as the basis for this thesis to reflect the contours of the ragged school movement, commencing with the establishment of the LRSU and closing with the Education Act for England and Wales of 1870. It was between these two dates that the movement grew, flourished, and began its decline. Publications such as the *Ragged School Union Magazine* (RSUM), the *Our Children's Magazine* (OCM), both of which were published monthly 'at a cost so marvellously low that the very humblest may become their patrons', as well as an assortment of books and pamphlets intended to propagate ragged schools have been consulted.<sup>61</sup> The majority of this literature was produced in London,

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<sup>59</sup> Goose and Honeyman, p. 9, Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 291.

<sup>60</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 291.

<sup>61</sup> 'Literary Notices', *Lancaster Gazette*, 16 July 1853, p. 6.

though with some notable exceptions. Both Alexander MacLagan's *Ragged School Rhymes* and the anonymously produced *Ragged School Crochet Book* were published in Edinburgh with their proceeds going towards the city's ragged schools, while the Reverend John Thornton's *A Trophy Won at the Ragged School* was published to support the Stockport ragged school.<sup>62</sup> Given the intention to explore the dialogue between scholars and teachers, those publications that contain lessons, stories, or hymns intended for the children are of particular value. The magazines have proven especially useful in this respect as the *RSUM*'s 'Teachers' Column' provided lesson ideas and pedagogical advice, while the whole of the *OCM* was intended to deliver wholesome and educational reading for scholars. As such, this literature facilitates a tentative glimpse into the ragged school classroom; it betrays the tone used in communication with the children at a public level and reveals the picture of ideal scholar-teacher interaction as conceived by the core of the movement. The magazines have been sampled at five year intervals, commencing with the *RSUM*'s first issue in 1849 and the *OCM*'s in 1850. As the *RSUM* has been digitised by *British Periodicals* it has been possible to search key words, which has proven useful in relation to particular individuals or schools.

In addition to the general promotional literature mentioned above, the writing and speeches of leading ragged school figures have been consulted. Bristol's Mary Carpenter, Edinburgh's Thomas Guthrie, London's Lord Shaftesbury, and Aberdeen's Sheriff Watson all influenced the philosophy and practice of ragged schools, both in their respective regions and at a national level. Together this material gives access to the movement's common

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<sup>62</sup> Alexander MacLagan, *Ragged School Rhymes* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1860), *The Ragged School Crochet Book* (Edinburgh: Paton and Ritchie, 1849), John Thornton, *A Trophy Won at the Ragged School; Being a Biographical Sketch of Frank Lyons* (London: Partridge and Paternoster, 1866).

discourse, highlighting the ideas shared – whether they were practised is a separate question – across schools, cities, and nations.

Local schools are explored through newspaper reports detailing annual meetings, opening ceremonies, and prize-giving events. Schools in Hull, Manchester, Nottingham, Sheffield, as well as Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley are among those institutions touched on in this way. As well as newspaper reports, documents from schools in England and Scotland have been consulted, selected on the basis of the richness of the sources preserved. The committee minutes of both Bristol ragged school, covering 1858 to 1862, and Field Lane ragged school, London, covering 1842 to 1870, have given insight into the mechanics of the institutions, uncovering, for instance, internal struggles relating to insufficient or inadequate staff. The diary maintained by the Field Lane beadle during 1870 and the institution's emigrant casebook provide specific information about scholars and enable a more comprehensive picture than is possible through committee minutes. The casebook is especially expansive, providing concise information on scholars before, during, and after their time at the school. In the Scottish context, the committee minutes of Helensburgh ragged school have been used, which span from 1860 to 1870, and have again been useful in demonstrating the school's difficulties. As well as this, the surviving annual reports of Greenock ragged school have been consulted, which cover the year 1850 and then the period from 1864 to 1871.

This body of sources gives access to the ragged school movement across England and Scotland, showing its shared language, philosophy, and resources. It provides a broad picture of the movement's achievements and demonstrates their varying support and attendance as well as the unique challenges particular institutions faced. The published

literature reveals how the problem of child poverty was portrayed to the public, demonstrating the rhetorical techniques used to gain attention in a society awash with philanthropic work, while documents from local schools show the breadth of individuals involved as well as the unpublicised challenges schools encountered. Yet this material falls short for the purposes of this thesis; the children's voices are only dimly, and perhaps imprecisely, echoed in adult references to children.

This thesis is both a macro- and a microhistory of the ragged school movement. Despite the notably different subject matter, Eamon Duffy's approach in *The Voices of Morebath* has been an important inspiration. Duffy's opening sentence claims 'This is a book about a sixteenth-century country priest, and the extraordinary notes he kept. It deals with ordinary people in an unimportant place'.<sup>63</sup> The words of one parish priest, Duffy argues, give access to 'a sophisticated succession of living voices'.<sup>64</sup> Yet, *The Voices of Morebath* is simultaneously a history of the Reformation and the tumult it caused; its impact upon individuals, churches, communities, and nations. According to Duffy, the priest's records 'offer a unique window into a rural world in crisis', providing a glimpse into one village's 'complex social life, its strains, tensions and conflicting personalities, its struggles to meet the growing demands of the Tudor war-effort'.<sup>65</sup> More recently, Seth Koven's *The Match Girl and the Heiress* has focused on the relationship between Nellie Dowell and Muriel Lester. Koven argues that in 'approaching large-scale developments as refracted through their relationship'

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<sup>63</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. xiii. Other microhistories consulted include Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. by John and Anne Tedeschi (New York: Penguin Books, 1982) and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Scholar Press, 1978).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. xiii.

he explores ‘class, gender, and social subjectivity’.<sup>66</sup> In reconstructing the lives of Nellie and Muriel through their letters, Koven both analyses the women’s ‘reciprocal, unequal, and asymmetrical’ relationship and sheds light on the wider matters of ‘class relations, gender formation, same-sex desire, and ethical subjectivity; war, pacifism, and Christian revolution; shop-floor labor politics and global capitalism; world citizenship and grassroots democracy’.<sup>67</sup> In a similar way, through focusing on one ragged school this thesis touches on children’s experiences of and responses to poverty, education, and religion. At the same time it explores the diverse experiences of working-class emigrants and the impact of mid-nineteenth century philanthropy, in particular the cross-class relationships it fostered.

In February 1989 Dr Martin Ware deposited his ancestors’ trove of diaries, memoirs, and wills, spanning from 1621 to 1962, in the Surrey History Centre in Woking. Among this material are the seven school journals of Martin Ware III (1818-1895), which he produced during his time at Compton Place ragged school in North London. The journals cover seventeen years, from 1850 to 1867, and detail Ware’s conversations with scholars and parents, his frustration regarding volunteers, and his concerns about difficult behaviour or poor attendance. The Compton Place collection is especially remarkable because of the existence of sources that give a voice to the children, independent of a mediator. The children are not only accessible through Ware’s journals, but are found in the collection of 227 letters from 57 former scholars. Sent by emigrants in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, or from posts in the army or navy, the letters give unique access to the boys’ own testimonies, articulated in their own words. This cache of documents, along with the letters Ware sent his

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<sup>66</sup> Seth Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11, p. 3.



family and the memoirs he composed in his final years, has been transcribed, word for word, as part of this research.

Ware was born in 1818, the son of a medical practitioner and grandson of an ‘oculist of great celebrity and the author of several works on diseases of the Eye’.<sup>68</sup> Ware himself trained as a barrister at Cambridge University and later divided his time between this vocation and his role as an unpaid ragged school teacher. Ware was heavily involved in the work of Compton Place ragged school, particularly its Sunday Evening boys’ class, of which he was superintendent from 1848 until approximately 1854, after which he appears to have stepped into the role when it was necessitated. Ware was involved with the school for twenty-two years, leaving upon his marriage to his ‘dear Mary’.<sup>69</sup> According to one of the obituaries carefully pasted into his final journal by an anonymous hand, Ware was ““a man of peculiar tenderness and affection””, ““To know him was to love him””.<sup>70</sup> Certainly this evaluation fits with the trust and respect that many boys appear to have invested in him (Appendix A: Figure 1).

Perhaps one of Ware’s most notable achievements was his involvement in the establishment of the Ragged School Shoeblack Society (RSSBS), which employed scholars who were recommended by their teachers. Those employed were provided with a shoe-blackening box and uniform and sent to clean boots in public thoroughfares for a small fee. Ware’s memoirs chronicle how the RSSBS was born when he and several others, including

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<sup>68</sup> SHC 1487/106/1, Memoirs of Martin Ware III.

<sup>69</sup> This figure is given in a hand-written note enclosed in Ware’s seventh journal from John Kirk, the secretary of the LRSU at the time of Ware’s death in December 1895. SHC 1585/7.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Ragged School Worthies’, *Record of the Ragged School and Mission Union* (1896), p.25. Obituary pasted in journal 7, SHC 1585/7.

John MacGregor, or ‘Rob Roy’, walked home together in 1851.<sup>71</sup> By 1878 the RSSBS consisted of nine different ‘Brigades’, each identified by the colour of their uniform.<sup>72</sup> Ware led the Red Shoeblack Brigade alongside his position at Compton Place; his school journals reveal his competitive spirit as he frequently noted his disappointment upon learning that particularly bright boys had joined other Brigades (Appendix A: Figure 2). Ware maintained an active role in the RSSBS following his withdrawal from the school until his death in late 1895. During this time he was also involved with a number of missionary societies, including the British and Foreign Bible Society, the China Inland Mission, and the Church Missionary Society, indicating his Evangelical commitments.<sup>73</sup> In his later years Ware acted as churchwarden at the Evangelical Anglican parish of St. Paul’s, Onslow Square, and was, in the words of one obituary, ‘amongst the most active of London laymen’.<sup>74</sup>

For the entirety of Ware’s first three school journals Compton Place was situated on a street of the same name, parallel to Hunter Street, in the borough of Camden. On 30 March 1855 Ware leased new school premises in Brunswick Buildings, Brunswick Street, now Tonbridge Street, just a five-minute walk from Compton Place. For simplicity the institution is referred to as ‘Compton Place’ throughout this thesis. The school itself was a small, unremarkable institution that lived in the shadow of larger and more successful sister schools. The term ‘unremarkable’ is appropriate as Compton Place was distinctly average by ragged school standards. It was plagued by the problems common to these institutions: a lack of money and teachers, challenging behaviour, and inconsistent attendance. Compton Place

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<sup>71</sup> SHC 1487/106/1.

<sup>72</sup> Heasman, p.78.

<sup>73</sup> SHC 1487/106/3-4, obituary printed in the *Globe*, pasted in Journal 7, SHC 1585/7.

<sup>74</sup> Obituary printed in the *Globe*, pasted in Journal 7, SHC 1585/7.

never received the attention that some schools did. Although it was founded in the early years of the ragged school crusade, seemingly 1845 or 1846, it rarely featured in ragged school promotional material. Unlike more infamous schools such as Field Lane or Whitechapel, Compton Place did not benefit from the visits of Shaftesbury or Charles Dickens. Nevertheless, the source base for Compton Place is both vast and rich, outstripping that of schools twice its size.

The material Ware preserved provides a rare and colourful insight into the daily happenings in one ragged school as well as giving access to the relationships that continued outside of the school building. Although Clark commented on the inaccessibility of the dialogue between scholars and teachers he nevertheless briefly perused Ware's school journals, commenting in his conclusion that in them 'we can see the authentic face of the devoted worker'.<sup>75</sup> For Clark, the journals were Ware's creation; however, this thesis demonstrates their complexity and argues that they not only capture the many faces of Ware but also the voices of the poor children he encountered. Together the school journals and emigrant letters allow both teacher and scholar to be heard; both parts of the dialogue inform this thesis. Moreover, the material from Compton Place enables an expansive perspective of the children's testimonies, first through the teacher's journals and later through the letters of former scholars, widening the historical lens beyond the snapshots found in anecdotal reports or committee minutes. For this reason, Ware and the Compton Place boys form the backbone of this thesis.

This thesis begins by assessing the social and economic context in which the ragged

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<sup>75</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 290.

schools developed. Attitudes towards poverty, Christian duty, children, and education are examined in the first part of chapter one, after which the emergence and growth of the schools is charted and the notion of a shared ragged school philosophy across England and Scotland is explored. As part of this, it is argued that ragged school narratives wove the institutions into pre-existing educational traditions, forging a deep history that embedded the movement into British society. Following this, the important role both working-class men and women from all social ranks played in the movement is identified. Chapter two focuses on the children that the schools were intended for. It uses references to poor children in local school documents to deconstruct the stereotypical street-child image found in ragged school discourse. Exploring such themes as the children's appearance, diets, health, and homes, this chapter uncovers the diverse lived experiences of poor children. Chapter three then moves into the ragged school classroom, analysing not only the education scholars received, but the ways they responded to and engaged with teachers. Although anecdotes and evidence from Compton Place are peppered throughout, chapters four and five move to focus explicitly upon this specific school and the relationships forged there. Chapter four explores Ware's journals in particular, examining what can be learned about both their author and the boys he taught. It argues that the journals were not only a method of recording events, but a devotional diary that narrated Ware's own sense of mission. Through Ware it draws attention to the many roles ragged school teachers could fulfil in their communities, in particular stressing the important part they could play in safeguarding scholars. As well as this, this chapter investigates what can be deduced about the scholars' attitudes towards Ware and his colleagues, thereby highlighting their diverse experiences of the classroom. Finally, chapter five focuses on the letters former scholars sent to Ware. It explores what can be seen of the

correspondents' literacy, as well as the value that they placed on reading and writing. Moreover, in analysing the religious contents of the letters, this chapter demonstrates the role that their ragged school education continued to play in the lives of former scholars. The prime focus of this chapter, however, is the scholar-teacher relationships evidenced in the correspondence. This chapter highlights both the vast array of connections formed as well as the way that scholar-teacher relationships could both endure and evolve.

## Chapter 1

### **‘The Glory of God for its end’: The Ragged School Movement**

#### **Introduction**

Reflecting on the 1840s with the benefit of fifty years of hindsight, Ware instructed the reader of his memoirs: ‘It must be remembered that at this time the destitute poor were very much neglected’.<sup>1</sup> This concise statement encapsulates the drastic changes that had occurred in the intervening years. Attitudes towards the poor and beliefs about poverty, ideas about children and childhood, and views regarding the duties of society and the value of philanthropy had all altered over the century. If it was necessary to reflect on these changes in the 1890s, it is still more necessary today.

This chapter begins with an overview of the societal context of the mid-nineteenth century. The impact of industrialisation, increased migration, and overcrowding upon urban centres is touched on, followed by an assessment of the destitute poor’s depiction during this period. Changing educational ideas about children and their development are then discussed, looking particularly at the increasing influence of environmentalist thought. Following this the chapter moves to examine the educational system in the early and mid-nineteenth century, focusing especially on the education available for poor children. The emergence and growth of ragged schools across England and Scotland is then traced, and particular attention is given to the coherence and shared discourse of the schools. The final two sections of this chapter examine the teachers involved in the schools. At this point the ‘silent testimony’ (to borrow

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<sup>1</sup> SHC 1487/106/1.

Clark's phrase) of working-class and female teachers is the prime focus of the investigation, as their significant contribution to the schools is analysed using both ragged school literature and local school documents.<sup>2</sup>

### **'The Solemn and Stern Realities': Setting the Scene**

Eric J. Evans writes that the rapid economic growth at the end of the eighteenth century was 'the most profound and thoroughgoing change yet experienced by mankind in society'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Burnett observes the marked social change during this period, writing that in 1801 'around 80 per cent of the population of England and Wales was still "rural"'. By the 1851 census, Burnett writes, 'the decisive tilt had taken place' and the majority of England's population now resided in urban areas.<sup>4</sup> Industrial towns experienced particularly steep and transformative growth; between 1821 and 1831 the population of Bradford, a centre of textile mills, increased by 78 per cent. Few cities were sufficiently prepared to accommodate such an influx of migrants and consequently 'overcrowding and a deterioration in housing standards were almost inevitable'.<sup>5</sup> In 1832 James Phillips Kay, later Kay-Shuttleworth, observed the harm squalid dwellings inflicted on inhabitants, noting that 'Sporadic cases of typhus chiefly appear in those [streets] which are narrow, ill ventilated, unpaved, or which contain heaps of refuse, or stagnant pools'.<sup>6</sup> The very poorest resided in cellars where they

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<sup>2</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (Essex: Pearson Education, 2001) p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>6</sup> James Phillips Kay, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (London: Ridgeway, 1832), p. 15.

were available; only those in direst need resorted to such cramped and damp dwellings. After citing the extensive habitation of cellars in Liverpool, London, and Manchester, Burnett notes that ‘large proportions of the population regularly lived in semi-subterranean “homes”, which at best were unsatisfactory from a sanitary point of view and, at worst, were disgusting and offensive insults to humanity’.<sup>7</sup>

During the same period discussions regarding the poor laws intensified as existing legislation was accused of aggravating ‘the very problems it was designed to alleviate’.<sup>8</sup> Those seeking reform pointed to the abuse of the Speenhamland system by ‘the sluggish slothful man impelled to work only by the direst necessity’.<sup>9</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb concisely summarises that the core complaint ‘repeated in countless pamphlets, tracts, sermons, articles, speeches, and reports, was that the poor laws were “pauperizing the poor”’.<sup>10</sup> Although historians have questioned the methods employed by the commissioners who compiled the 1834 Poor Law Report, its significance both in drawing attention to the poor’s condition and in questioning how poverty should be responded to cannot be denied.<sup>11</sup> According to Evans, by ‘the mid-1840s it was not open to anti-reformers to deny that the most important factors affecting longevity were an individual’s social class and place of residence’.<sup>12</sup> The close neighbouring of poverty and wealth in London particularly fostered an uncomfortable atmosphere. In Himmelfarb’s estimation, the existence of poverty was not only disturbing because of the suffering it entailed but because it was regarded as regressive.<sup>13</sup> The perceived

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<sup>7</sup> Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, pp. 58-61.

<sup>8</sup> Evans, p. 276.

<sup>9</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Knopf, 1984), p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup> Evans, p. 278, Himmelfarb, p. 155.

<sup>12</sup> Evans, p. 293.

<sup>13</sup> Himmelfarb, p. 362.



status of the metropolis as “the first city in the world” made the continuing existence of ‘misery, ignorance and vice, amidst all the immense wealth and great knowledge’ a ‘national disgrace’.<sup>14</sup>

Both in appearance and in experience the extreme poor were perceived as wholly other. In the 1842 Report by the Poor Law Commissioners one ‘witness’ drew on imagery from Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* to describe Spitalfields weavers, stating that they were “decayed in their bodies; the whole race of them is rapidly descending to the size of Liliputians”.<sup>15</sup> Like the residents of Liliput, they were part of a different colony, a tribe distinguished by its difference from ‘the norm’. Henry Mayhew, the *Morning Chronicle*’s ‘Special Correspondent’, dubbed the ‘discoverer of the “poor”’ by Himmelfarb, used such othering language extensively in his reports.<sup>16</sup> He framed his accounts with terminology that stressed the curiosity and distinctiveness of those he spoke with. Mayhew’s investigation into ‘Street-folk’ includes among its sub-headings ‘Of wandering tribes in general’ and ‘Wandering tribes in this country’, exemplifying his argument that those mentioned were ‘part of the nomads of England, neither knowing nor caring for the enjoyments of home’.<sup>17</sup> The image of a barbarous tribe dwelling in the midst of civilised Britain proved a powerful one. Himmelfarb writes that the “strange” country unearthed by Mayhew’ acted as a ‘blank check on credibility, an invitation to the suspension of disbelief. Since it was an unknown country that was being

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, ed. by Rosemary O’Day and David Englander (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), p. li.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Report to Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, from the Poor Law Commissioners, on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain’, 1842 (006), p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Himmelfarb, p. 312.

<sup>17</sup> Mayhew, p. 56.

explored for the first time, anything might be true, nothing was inconceivable'.<sup>18</sup> Mayhew himself contrasted his findings with those of missionaries overseas, writing in the introduction to the 1861 edition of his collected reports that 'It is curious, moreover, as supplying information concerning a large body of persons, of whom the public had less knowledge than of the most distant tribes of the earth'.<sup>19</sup>

The early and mid-nineteenth century was a period of expansion and excitement for (to use Catherine Hall's phrase) 'the missionary public'.<sup>20</sup> Brown describes how the nation was 'thrilled to the heroic exploits of missionaries, who traversed the globe and preached to heathen peoples in exotic settings'. Britain was deemed an 'elect nation', divinely chosen to spread the Christian message.<sup>21</sup> The 'flurry of excitement' surrounding overseas missions overflowed into the domestic arena, with the early and mid-nineteenth century witnessing a marked increase in philanthropic activity at home.<sup>22</sup> Alison Twells writes in *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class* that during 'the 1820s, missionary philanthropy infused English culture', involving 'women and children as well as men, it was public and familial, domestic and global, simultaneously involving intimate and very distant concerns'.<sup>23</sup> According to Twells, whether 'located in Britain, Tahiti or the rural areas surrounding Calcutta, early missions adopted a very similar structure, combining methods of Christian education with a programme for 'civilisation', or cultural reform'.<sup>24</sup> Overseas missions and

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<sup>18</sup> Himmelfarb, p. 350.

<sup>19</sup> Mayhew, p. il.

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 292-293.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, pp. 195-196.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle-Class, 1792-1850* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

domestic philanthropy were two sides of the same evangelical coin.

The nineteenth century was, according to David Bebbington, ‘the Evangelical century’.<sup>25</sup> Missions, whether to city slums or to South India, were driven by a fervent desire to save souls and alleviate bodily suffering. The title of Heasman’s book, *Evangelicals in Action*, encapsulates her argument that Victorian evangelicals ‘are remembered for what they did rather than for their theology’.<sup>26</sup> The critical contribution that evangelicals, both from within the Established Church and dissenting denominations, made to domestic philanthropy is noted by Heasman, who estimates that ‘three-quarters of the total number of voluntary charitable organisations in the second half of the nineteenth century can be regarded as Evangelical in character and control’.<sup>27</sup> Although hailing from diverse church backgrounds evangelicals were united by shared principles. Bebbington identifies four core tenets of evangelicalism: activism, biblicism, conversionism, and crucicentrism.<sup>28</sup> They were, in Chadwick’s words, ‘men of the Reformation, who preached the cross, the depravity of man, and justification by faith alone’.<sup>29</sup> Dancing, playing cards, and visiting theatres were disapproved of, while the sanctity of Sunday and the value of regular Bible study were asserted.<sup>30</sup> Evangelicals were likewise united by a deep-seated suspicion of Catholicism; as Chadwick observes, ‘Rome they feared with the fear of the antichrist’.<sup>31</sup> A passion to spread the good news of the Gospel through word and deed shaped the lives of dedicated

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<sup>25</sup> David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 149.

<sup>26</sup> Heasman, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> Bebbington, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Chadwick, pp. 440-441.

<sup>30</sup> See Bebbington, pp. 129-132.

<sup>31</sup> Chadwick, p. 441.

evangelicals. Brown notes that Shaftesbury, the leading Evangelical Anglican who played a crucial role in the ragged school movement, was driven by ‘the ever-present sense that he would be personally held to account by God for his wealth, his privilege, his status, his political influence, his talents and his every moment of time in this world’.<sup>32</sup> Such feelings were not unique to Shaftesbury; rather, as Heasman has highlighted, the personal nature of evangelical faith often culminated in a strong conviction of personal duty.<sup>33</sup>

A century before General Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out* controversially played on the title of Henry Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa* in 1890, the uncomfortable jarring between conditions for the inhabitants of the African jungle and the condition of the poor in Britain was cited as a stimulus by evangelicals promoting philanthropic work at home.<sup>34</sup> Hannah More formed her original Sunday school in Somerset at the close of the eighteenth century because the local children were “so ignorant, so poor and so vicious, that I consider it a sort of Botany Bay expedition”.<sup>35</sup> In the ensuing decades the connections between overseas missions and the preponderance of impoverished, ‘heathen’, children in British cities were referred to with abandon. In his research on the depiction of impoverished children Cunningham observes that there was a strong association between the street-child and the savage; both were representative of ‘someone who needed to be rescued, saved, and civilised’.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Twells describes the ‘interconnectedness of languages of savages and civilisation, heathenism and Christianity in missionary writing’.<sup>37</sup> Overseas missions provided

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<sup>32</sup> Brown, pp. 163-164.

<sup>33</sup> Heasman, pp. 18-19.

<sup>34</sup> Although conveying General Booth’s vision *In Darkest England* was composed by William T. Stead, the sensationalist and controversial editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

<sup>35</sup> Twells, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor*, p. 97.

<sup>37</sup> Twells, p. 2.

a literary template that was readily utilised by domestic philanthropists in the hope of sharing in the wealth of prayer and financial support the British public could offer.

Although George Hall's 1855 account of the ragged school movement aimed to reach the public 'by the hearts, and not by the imaginations', he nevertheless steered his readers into uncharted London territory.<sup>38</sup> Drawing on the language and form of missionary accounts, he asked his audience 'Reader, will you go with us on this exploring expedition?'.<sup>39</sup> The explorative style popular in mission narratives was adopted to embellish and enliven accounts of British poverty. Just as Mayhew depicted street-folk as "“peculiar,” “odd,” “strange,” “distinct”", street-children were transformed into mysterious creatures to be sought out in the city.<sup>40</sup> Hall proclaimed 'Let us visit one of those districts in which he may be found' and encouraged readers to 'inquire somewhat carefully into his hopes and fears, his plans and expectations; where he lurks, how he looks and what he does'.<sup>41</sup> The advice to 'inquire somewhat carefully' combined with references to the child's 'hopes and fears' and 'looks', which, by inference, were different to those of the reader, promotes a sense of the subject's otherness and advocates their status as an outsider.

Hall was not alone in encouraging the public to enter poor areas and witness harrowing sights for themselves; those present at the LRSU's fifth annual meeting were instructed to 'Hunt them out and see them'.<sup>42</sup> George Bell, the secretary of the Edinburgh ragged school, told readers that in order to understand poverty 'a student must have

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<sup>38</sup> George Hall, *Sought and Saved: A Prize Essay on the Ragged Schools and Kindred Institutions* (London: Partridge and Oakley, 1855), p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Himmelfarb, p. 334.

<sup>41</sup> G. Hall, p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> 'Proceedings at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1849), p. 105.

descended into the places where alone he can get information, and he must have tarried among the inhabitants of these'.<sup>43</sup> A sense of urgency is detectable in his assertion that 'These places must be seen; and whoever wishes to have a just perception of what they are, must visit them'.<sup>44</sup> The inadequacy of words was regularly asserted; Edinburgh's William Anderson noted that it 'is, in fact, impossible to realise the terrible state of many of the houses and the abject condition of their inhabitants unless they are visited'.<sup>45</sup> Jackson's observation that references to 'nameless outrages' or the use of euphemisms culminates in 'a highly interpretative and value-laden description' is useful here as the assertion that poor areas were indescribable and warranted personal investigation sensationalised accounts beyond what was possible within the confines of language.<sup>46</sup>

Narratives of this nature presented child poverty as hidden and nurtured intrigue in the reader. Yet this is at odds with the visible reality of street-children in urban areas; they were part of the cultural landscape of the city. Himmelfarb's argument that Mayhew's reports were impactful 'because they were not entirely unfamiliar; the shock of discovery was actually a shock of recognition' is also applicable to the shock invoked by accounts of poor children.<sup>47</sup> Ragged children featured frequently in light-hearted *Punch* illustrations, normally depicted as mischievous boys throwing snowballs, disrupting traffic, or harassing passers-by. Jane Humphries writes that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century 'England was awash with children', citing that the proportion of the population aged between five and fourteen

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<sup>43</sup> George Bell, *Day and Night in the Wynds of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1849), p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> William Anderson, *The Poor of Edinburgh and Their Homes* (Edinburgh: Menzies, 1867), p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 55.

<sup>47</sup> Himmelfarb, p. 356.

years rose from 18 per cent in 1676 to 24 per cent in 1826.<sup>48</sup> In the 1850s Mayhew estimated that there were approximately 30,000 adults obtaining their living upon London's streets – as costermongers, bone-grubbers, and mud-larks among a variety of other trades. When including children in his calculations, Mayhew increased this estimation to 'upwards of fifty thousand individuals'.<sup>49</sup> Guthrie was less specific regarding the number of poor children on Edinburgh's streets in 1847, referencing their 'crowds' and stating that there 'are at least a thousand' before adding '(others say some thousands, but I would much rather under-state than in the least exaggerate the case)'.<sup>50</sup> Poor children were not hidden; rather, they were highly visible, begging, selling, and playing upon the streets.

During the same period there was an increasing sentimentalisation of children. One needs only sample a small number of adverts or postcards from the mid-nineteenth century to observe the idyllic portrayal of infants. Such images depicted childhood as a precious, almost sacred, period of innocence, a 'phase of life marked by pleasure and play'.<sup>51</sup> The significant influence John Locke's writing on education a century earlier had upon attitudes towards children is well established among historians of childhood.<sup>52</sup> The Lockean theory of *tabula rasa*, the notion that infants are wholly shaped by their early experiences, placed an emphasis on nurture above nature. Cunningham, Jackson, and Sánchez-Eppler concur in noting the declining influence of the Calvinistic emphasis on original sin, which were

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<sup>48</sup> Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty in the Workhouse: Children's Experiences of Residential Poor Relief in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', in *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750-1914*, ed. by Goose and Honeyman, pp. 115-134 (p. 115).

<sup>49</sup> Mayhew, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Guthrie, *A Plea for Ragged Schools; or, Prevention Better Than Cure* (Edinburgh: Elder, 1847), p. 9, p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress*, p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p.6, Laqueur, p.10, Mahood and Littlewood, p.555, Platt, 'The Rise of the Child-Saving Movement', p.23, Sánchez-Eppler, p.xviii.

supplemented, or even substituted, with Romantic beliefs about childhood. According to Jackson, the belief that children were ‘evil by nature, requiring rigorous discipline’ was ‘replaced with the idea, promoted by Wordsworth and the romantic poets, that children, born as innocents, were innately virtuous’.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Cunningham writes that it is ‘difficult to exaggerate the influence of Wordsworth’s Ode’, and cites Dickens’s ‘childhood heroes’ who appear “‘fresh from God”, as the embodiment of a force of innate goodness which could rescue embittered adults’.<sup>54</sup> At the core of Romantic ideas about childhood was, in Cunningham’s words, ‘a reverence for, and a sanctification of childhood which was at total odds with the Puritan emphasis on the child as a sinful being’.<sup>55</sup> Laqueur likewise references the cultural significance of Wordsworth’s poetry, while noting the contrary dualistic depiction of children found throughout religious literature in the nineteenth century. Rather than arguing that negative beliefs about the nature of children were replaced, Laqueur argues that notions of original sin and innocence co-existed in tension, with both ideas being found across religious discourse.<sup>56</sup> The multiplicity of attitudes towards children in the nineteenth century is also stressed by Sánchez-Eppler, who writes:

Calvinist conceptions of “infant depravity” and the inherent sinfulness of children, Lockean conceptions of childhood as a “blank slate” upon which parental authority must write, Romantic visions of the child as natural and as innocent as nature vied and mingled with each other.<sup>57</sup>

Supposedly incompatible ideas about children are found not only in religious discourse, but also in the minds of individuals who frequently held to compartmentalised and conflicting

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<sup>53</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p.5.

<sup>54</sup> Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, p.74.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.77.

<sup>56</sup> Laqueur, p.10.

<sup>57</sup> Sánchez-Eppler, p. xviii.



notions.

The desire to improve the conditions of poor children stemmed from the disjuncture between the middle-class concept of childhood and the street-child's experience. In the opening pages of *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, Cunningham states his intention to explore the emergence of the 'belief that children are real children only if their life experiences accord with a particular set of ideas about childhood'.<sup>58</sup> Cunningham cites Mayhew's encounter with the eight-year-old watercress-seller as an illustration of the chasm separating popular ideas about childhood from the daily lives of working-class children. Mayhew asked the watercress-seller 'about her toys and her games with her companions', only to express his shock at her response that she didn't have any. Summarising this account, Cunningham states 'Rarely do two concepts of childhood at such odds with one another confront each other so directly'.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, Steedman argues that 'Mayhew could not see this child' and references the 'inexplicableness' of the watercress girl to her middle-class observer.<sup>60</sup>

The physical confrontation of these two opposing childhoods is seen in a picture entitled 'Candour', published in *Punch* in October 1860 (Appendix A: Figure 3). The picture contrasts a ragged, bare-footed boy with a well-dressed, well-mannered middle-class girl, who is accompanied by a gentleman. The man addresses the boy, stating, rather than asking, "Well my little man, what do you want?". These words succinctly summarise attitudes towards ragged children; in addressing the boy as 'my little man' the gentleman infers that the boy is old beyond his years, while the presumption that he wanted something highlights the

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<sup>58</sup> Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor*, p. 109.

<sup>60</sup> Steedman, *Strange Dislocations*, p. 117. See also Steedman, *Past Tenses: Essays on Writing Autobiography and History* (London: River Oram Press, 1992), pp. 198-200.

suspicion that surrounded such children. Further, the boy's comical and cutting response that he 'wants Heverything!' expresses the void-like character of poor children in the eyes of the artist. Defined according to their want, whether of clothing, food, or care, such children contradicted the image of a protected and innocent childhood.

Given the influence of Lockean thought described above, the fatalistic notion that children were products of their experiences increased. As children were moulded by their early encounters, the notion of the 'experienced' child proved disconcerting; in Shore's words, 'tender age did not automatically correlate to innocence of inexperience'.<sup>61</sup> Jackson's observations regarding the depiction of sexual abuse victims is helpful here, as she notes that girls 'who lost their innocence could no longer be deemed "children"'. Instead, they were "unnatural" beings, premature adults who had not had the benefits of a "healthy", "normal" development'.<sup>62</sup> Such children, like the 'little man' in 'Candour', were described as oddly aged for their years. On this topic Cunningham notes that 'street children lacked all of what had become the accepted characteristics of children', citing Mayhew's observation that the watercress-seller "had entirely lost all childish ways", and that her face was wrinkled "where dimples ought to have been".<sup>63</sup> The image of the prematurely aged child was both disturbing and pitiful, evoking contrary feelings in its audience. Despite defying the notion of the child as innocent, and, by extension, inexperienced, the prematurely aged and experienced child was nevertheless a victim of 'misery and misfortune', who had been forced into independence and self-reliance too soon.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Shore, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>63</sup> Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, p. 146.

<sup>64</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

As part of this concern regarding the children's experiences, their homes and street environments came under scrutiny. The research of Jackson, Mahood, and Marianne Moore draws attention to the role of environmentalism in growing concerns about child welfare, while Shore cites 'parental neglect' as part of a 'mantra' that explained juvenile delinquency.<sup>65</sup> Corrupt parents were accused of corrupting their children; there was an assumption that impoverished children were 'cradled in iniquity' and reared in their parent's sinful ways.<sup>66</sup> When referencing Mary Carpenter, Moore highlights the prominence of environmentalism in her thought, arguing that she 'drew awareness to the fact that it was lack of nurture rather than any inherent disposition toward evil that had led to the sorry state of the children'.<sup>67</sup> Streets likewise posed a threat to the children's development. According to Shore, the "street" represented a place of moral corruption to young people', while Jackson categorises it as a 'hazardous and contaminating' space.<sup>68</sup> It was on the streets that children were particularly at risk from the influence of suspect individuals; *Oliver Twist's* Fagin endures as a prime example of the predatory villain who sought out vulnerable poor children. 'The Crossing-Sweeper Nuisance', published in *Punch* in January 1856, highlights the anxieties surrounding connections made in the street (Appendix A: Figure 4). It depicts a crowd of young, ragged crossing-sweepers surrounding an affronted-looking middle-class gentleman in the hope of receiving spare change. Beyond causing a nuisance, the children are presenting a considerable threat by obstructing the road and forcing an omnibus to halt. Notably, to the

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<sup>65</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, Jackson, 'Children of the Streets', Marianne Moore, 'Social Control or Protection of the Child?: The Debates on the Industrial Schools Acts, 1857-1894', *Journal of Family History*, 33:4 (2008), 359-287, Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family*, Shore, p. 20.

<sup>66</sup> Shore, p. 35.

<sup>67</sup> Moore, p. 365.

<sup>68</sup> Shore, p. 24, Jackson, 'Children of the Streets', p. 136.

left of the image an unkempt older woman is observing the scene with a wry smile while holding a broom, indicating that she had encouraged or coordinated the children.

Given the concerns regarding the children's circumstances it is unsurprising that fatalism pervaded accounts of impoverished children. As John Matthew Feheney observes in his article on the portrayal of Irish Catholic children, the whole body of poor children came to be regarded as delinquent through the synonymy of the terms 'street-child' and 'criminal'.<sup>69</sup> Guthrie's persuasive words that 'the circumstances of these children stand to crime in the relation of cause to effect' demonstrate the close association between poverty and criminality.<sup>70</sup> Similar pessimism is present in Hall's statement that street-children were 'battling hard for respectability and virtue against fearful odds'.<sup>71</sup> According to Caroline Cornwallis's 1851 book in support of the movement, *The Philosophy of Ragged Schools*, the 'mind of the child must receive its bent from the circumstances by which he is surrounded and the companions among whom he is thrown'.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the children were not merely a criminal threat, but a revolutionary one. Cornwallis opened her book on the schools with the observation that 'It is but a short time since [...] almost every throne in Christendom had been shaken or overturned by popular insurrection'. She then portentously stated that 'This outbreak of popular discontent [...], which frightened all Europe from its propriety, is just now lulled: but is it quieted altogether?'.<sup>73</sup> In commencing in such a manner Cornwallis asserted the children's potential as revolutionary agents. The revolutionary danger the

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<sup>69</sup> J.M. Feheney, 'Delinquency Among Irish Catholic Children in Victorian London', *Irish Historical Studies*, 23:92 (1983), 319-329.

<sup>70</sup> Guthrie, *Memorial on the Claim of Ragged Industrial Schools to Government Support* (Edinburgh: Jack, 1852), p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> G. Hall, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Caroline Cornwallis, *The Philosophy of Ragged Schools* (London: Pickering, 1851), p. 115.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

children posed was also referenced at a LRSU meeting in 1849, when the Duke of Argyll said in reference to the turmoil in Europe:

those who had been to the continent and who were there [in 1848] expressed their astonishment and wonder [at those children] who haunted the streets of the great cities of Europe in times of revolution. He had heard it said that such a class could not be produced in England; but he (the Duke of Argyll) advised the meeting not to believe such a statement too readily.<sup>74</sup>

Such concerns regarding the impact of negative influences on poor children were inextricably associated with the concept of ‘childhood as a period of vulnerability’.<sup>75</sup> Poor children were at the mercy of fortune; their circumstances and chance encounters would shape them for better or worse. Despite the children’s criminal and revolutionary potential, environmentalist ideas meant they were nevertheless helpless victims in need of protection and guidance. This framework underscored the importance of safeguarding poor children and effectively necessitated intervention on their behalf.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century there was a growing demand for education to be universally available in Britain. According to Evans, by ‘1815 the argument was not whether education for the lower orders was proper but how much should be provided’.<sup>76</sup> Evans comments on the role class anxieties played in extending education to the poor, noting that it ‘is no accident that factory reform and educational provision were so often linked’. By gathering masses of labourers in close, confined spaces ‘in monstrously multiplying towns’, it was feared that immorality would likewise multiply.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, Sanderson argues that by the 1830s the dominant ideology among policy makers was that

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<sup>74</sup> ‘Ragged School Union’, *The Times*, 16 May 1849, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Moore, p. 369.

<sup>76</sup> Evans, p. 68.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

education should be provided ‘in the hope that it would serve as an agency of social control’, rather than the earlier approach of ‘denying education to the poor and so avoid trouble’.<sup>78</sup> With reference to Scotland in particular, W.B. Stephens claims that aspirations to popular education predated the industrialisation and that there was ‘general agreement’ that mass education would benefit all of society.<sup>79</sup>

Education was regarded as a tool that could create a more moral society; the ability to read would enable the poor to study the Bible and Christian tracts, thereby countering irreligion. It was deemed the antidote to the poisonous influences infecting poor children. Further, teaching children to read was deemed a Christian duty by those who felt that to do otherwise contradicted Christ’s commandment to suffer children to come.<sup>80</sup> By the close of the nineteenth century in America, Sánchez-Eppler notes that learning to read and write was deemed ‘a principal task of childhood’.<sup>81</sup> This feeling was already growing in Britain in the early nineteenth century. When Shaftesbury brought the matter of unrestricted child labour before government in August 1840, labelling it a ‘system of legalised slavery’, key to his argument was the absence of educational prospects for children working long hours. He told those present that ‘their opportunities for education are almost none’ and asserted that they should be brought ‘under the influence of what Dr. Chalmers would call an aggressive movement of education’.<sup>82</sup>

A diverse range of schools existed across Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>78</sup> Sanderson, p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Stephens, p. 12.

<sup>80</sup> William Watson, *Chapters on Ragged and Industrial Schools* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1872), p. 12.

<sup>81</sup> Sánchez-Eppler, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Labour of Children’, *Morning Post*, 5 August 1840, p. 3.

Public schools for the middle and upper classes grew in popularity during this period, representing a move away from the home schooling system that had been favoured the previous century.<sup>83</sup> In England a more modest education for the working classes was available in Anglican Church schools in exchange for a small fee. These grew in prominence following substantial state grants from 1833 and quickly dominated the educational scene.<sup>84</sup> According to Evans the evangelical revival towards the end of the eighteenth century had resulted in a 'bewildering variety' of church schools in England and Wales, while Stephens comments on the positive impact 'inter-denominational rivalry and internal divisions' had on schooling throughout Britain.<sup>85</sup> Scotland's parochial school system ensured, in theory at least, that an education was available for children across the country. Yet, Gaelic-speaking populations were frequently poorly catered for. Moreover, Stephens has observed that parochial schools suffered under the strain of industrialisation, urbanisation, and inflation.<sup>86</sup> According to Royle, despite 'myths about Scottish supremacy in literacy and the provision of schooling, in fact the experiences of comparable regions in England and Scotland were not dissimilar'.<sup>87</sup> Scotland, like England, suffered from widespread illiteracy, particularly among those who had migrated from the highlands to the cities.<sup>88</sup>

Alternative schools existed for those who objected to Church schools. Dame schools provided a basic education in exchange for a negligible payment. In Evans's estimation these were 'educationally worthless', acting as little more than nurseries for labouring mothers.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Sanderson, p. 38.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>85</sup> Evans, p. 290, Stephens, p. 13.

<sup>86</sup> Stephens, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Royle, p. 358.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 357.

<sup>89</sup> Evans, p. 290.

Usually taught by older women in their homes, dame schools were frequently criticised for their inconsistency and were ‘maligned by the educational reformers’.<sup>90</sup> The Committee of Council on Education reported to parliament in 1841 that dame schools were ‘divisible generally into two classes’; those ‘kept by persons fond of children’ and ‘those kept by widows and other who are compelled by necessity to seek some employment by which they may eke out their scanty means of subsistence’.<sup>91</sup> Yet, these schools varied in quality as much as the abilities of ‘dames’ varied. Some, as Evans asserts, acted as cheap childcare, while others successfully instructed scholars in reading and writing and were a trusted and valued part of working-class communities.<sup>92</sup>

Sunday schools comprise the final major contributor to the nation’s education system in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. From their modest beginnings under the efforts of Hannah Ball in High Wycombe and Robert Raikes in Gloucester, they numbered approximately 2,000 by 1800.<sup>93</sup> According to Laqueur, the ‘explosive growth of Sunday schools in the late eighteenth century surprised even their most sanguine supporters’.<sup>94</sup> Sunday schools provided religious instruction while teaching children to read; Sanderson argues that they were one of the ‘chief’ contributors to rising literacy levels at the close of the eighteenth century.<sup>95</sup> Despite their ‘expressly ecumenical’ outlook, Sunday schools, like Church schools, faced internal divisions.<sup>96</sup> Laqueur notes that many Sunday school workers were ‘opposed, on principle, to interdenominationalism’ and were supportive of the schools

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<sup>90</sup> Royle, p. 356.

<sup>91</sup> *Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, with Appendices*: PP. 1840-41, 1841 1 (317) XX.53.

<sup>92</sup> Royle, p. 356.

<sup>93</sup> Evans, p. 68.

<sup>94</sup> Laqueur, p. 42.

<sup>95</sup> Sanderson, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Laqueur, p. 34.



on the basis that they were ‘completely under the control of the parish clergy’.<sup>97</sup> At the close of the eighteenth century the ‘extensive use of laymen’ triggered the Blagdon Controversy. Evans writes that the ‘Controversy was a harbinger of more sustained distrust between, on the one hand, “orthodox” Anglican foundations where laymen were employed sparingly and under strict regulation and, on the other, evangelical and nonconformist institutions where lay direction was much stronger’.<sup>98</sup>

Reflecting the diversity of schools in existence, literacy levels were likewise diverse. Sanderson and Stephens both comment on the challenges faced in discerning reading and writing abilities; however, they form a general picture of literacy using school attendance statistics and marriage register signatures.<sup>99</sup> According to Stephens:

the evidence suggests that in England in the early nineteenth century over one-third of those able to read could not write. In Scotland the proportions able only to read may have been greater, and both in England and Scotland more women than men were likely to have been in this position.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, Stephens notes that national statistics ‘disguise’ the widely varying geographical trends that were affected by the financial assistance available, the attitude of local clergy, as well as the response of the labouring population.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the education children received was ultimately subject to the abilities and priorities of teachers. There was little uniformity across the institutions; however, the majority concurred that religious instruction should form a core component. Although there was a general acknowledgement that poor children should receive education, there were disputes regarding the level that should be imparted. Church

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-67.

<sup>98</sup> Evans, p. 69.

<sup>99</sup> Sanderson, pp. 9-18, Stephens, pp. 21-39.

<sup>100</sup> Stephens, p. 27.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

schools were particularly wide ranging in the education granted, with some teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic and others not teaching children to read at all and instead focusing on practical skills.<sup>102</sup> Conversely, all Sunday schools taught children to read as it was regarded a crucial component of teaching Scripture.<sup>103</sup> As Laqueur notes, it was felt that the 'labouring classes should learn to read so that they might read their Bible, fill up their leisure time more constructively, and thereby keep out of mischief'.<sup>104</sup> Because of this, writing and arithmetic were deemed 'irrelevant' by some Sunday schools supporters.<sup>105</sup> Concerns regarding writing in particular have been thoroughly documented by historians of education.<sup>106</sup> Evans notes that writing was considered a 'dangerous skill' by those who felt 'the precipice separating the opposed disasters of untamed, brute ignorance and a discontented class with inflated expectations born of inappropriately extensive education was desperately narrow'.<sup>107</sup>

Laqueur's research on Sunday schools demonstrates that there was 'a strong working-class demand' for education, while Cunningham writes that 'there is clear evidence of a demand for schooling', arguing that opposition from parents only emerged upon the introduction of compulsory schooling.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, the very poorest were precluded from the existing schools. Cunningham estimates that for 'perhaps some 20 per cent of the population, payment of fees was out of the question', effectively removing Church and dame schools from the equation.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Stephens writes that 'the children of the poverty-

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>103</sup> Laqueur, p. 111.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 126

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>106</sup> Evans, p. 69, Laqueur, pp. 124-146, Sanderson, pp. 19-20.

<sup>107</sup> Evans, p. 69.

<sup>108</sup> Laqueur, p. 148, Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>109</sup> Laqueur, p. 103.

stricken and debauched (the ‘dangerous classes’ created by urbanization and industrialization) were largely ignored by or deliberately excluded from mainstream public schooling’.<sup>110</sup> Sunday schools, though free, were able to turn away children whose difficult behaviour or unkempt appearance was regarded as inappropriate or disruptive. Even in those cases in which Sunday school teachers accommodated the most destitute children, the disparity in their appearance from their classmates would have likely discouraged them from returning.

Schools specifically intended for the impoverished children denied education elsewhere were founded in the early nineteenth century. They were established by individuals who, like Shaftesbury, believed that through education it was possible to ‘cultivate the moral and physical condition of these children’.<sup>111</sup> In the 1830s John Pounds, a Portsmouth shoemaker, taught the city’s street-children “‘book-learning” and shoemaking in his workshop, gathering together a class of over forty children. He encouraged ragged children to attend his classes through the promise of a hot potato and, according to Cornwallis, ‘once at the school, his scholars seldom needed urging to come a second time’.<sup>112</sup> A similar system, albeit on a larger scale, was commenced in Aberdeen in October 1841 when Sheriff Watson established a school in response to the ‘idle, ignorant, and vicious’ boys on the city’s streets.<sup>113</sup> With the school day running from 8am to 7pm scholars received meals in addition to instruction; following the school’s success a similar school for girls was established two years later. Considerably expanding on Pounds’s modest workshop, the Aberdeen schools conveyed practical skills such as net-making for boys and knitting for girls, alongside

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<sup>110</sup> Stephens, p. 10.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Labour of Children’, *Morning Post*, 5 August 1840, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> Cornwallis, p. 43.

<sup>113</sup> Watson, p. 7.

‘Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and singing’ as well as ‘for a time, geology’.<sup>114</sup>

Just a month after Watson’s first school opened in Aberdeen, the ‘Field Lane Sabbath School’ commenced in Clerkenwell, central London. Three years later, when reflecting on the initial meeting that took place on 7 November 1841, the institution’s committee recorded that ‘forty-five boys and girls of various ages’ had attended, ‘seated on the floor for want of better accommodation’.<sup>115</sup> It was agreed at a committee meeting on 7 February 1843 that the school’s treasurer, S. R. Starey, ‘be empowered to insert an advertisement in “The Times” newspaper, stating that a School had been established in this neighbourhood; & calling upon the public to assist in supporting’.<sup>116</sup> The advert Starey submitted was headed ‘Ragged Schools’, a phrase he later explained was chosen because it ‘forcibly and tritely expressed the low character and condition of the pupils’.<sup>117</sup> For its first five years classes were held every Thursday evening and for four hours each Sunday. During the school’s fifth annual meeting plans were announced to commence a day school on the basis that the institution had already shown ‘remarkable proof’ of the successes possible.<sup>118</sup> Shaftesbury was a supporter of Field Lane from its early days; the institution’s committee minutes demonstrate that as early as 12 April 1843 he donated £2 to its work.<sup>119</sup> Seven years later, in August 1850, he gifted ‘18 or 20 Bibles’ to the school in addition to £6 for the summer excursion.<sup>120</sup> One of the oldest ragged schools, Field Lane would go on to be the most prominent. It played a significant role in

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>115</sup> London Metropolitan Archive (LMA)/4060/A/01/001, Field Lane Ragged School Management Committee, 3 January 1844.

<sup>116</sup> LMA 4060/1/01/001, 7 February 1843.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *The Times*, 18 February 1843, ‘Correspondence’, *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 56.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Field Lane Ragged Schools’, *Observer*, 20 December 1846, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 12 April 1843.

<sup>120</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 7 August 1850.

shaping the movement; Starey's newspaper advert not only birthed the term that defined ragged school philosophy, but is an early example of the institution's keenness to communicate with the public.

### **'Never Again Forgotten Class': Providing for Ragged Children**

On 11 April 1844 four men met at 17 Ampton Street, St. Pancras, to pray for the schools providing education to London's poor children. Those gathered were 'Mr Locke, a woollen-draper; Mr Moulton, a dealer in second-hand tools; Mr Morrison, a city missionary, and Mr Starey'.<sup>121</sup> The men present, although representing different sectors of society, were unified in their desire to increase and improve their work with impoverished children. It was at this meeting that the notion of a London Ragged School Union (LRSU) was formulated. When communicating this development to the Field Lane committee, Starey stated that its purpose would be 'uniting together and mutually assisting Ragged Schools'.<sup>122</sup> Little time was wasted in forming the LRSU; the following month the Field Lane committee minutes relate that a 'letter was given in by Mr Starey, (and read) from the Secretary to the Ragged School Union, requesting this Committee to depute two of its number to attend the Meeting of the said Union'.<sup>123</sup> By November 1844 Shaftesbury had accepted an invitation to become the LRSU's president, a position held until his death in 1885. Under his charismatic leadership and 'child-

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<sup>121</sup> Montague, p. 167. The majority of sources, including Montague, name the date as 11 April, however in the Field Lane committee minutes Starey relates that the idea originated during a meeting 'held on the 5<sup>th</sup> April'. It is possible that the idea of a Union was solidified in the meeting the following week. LMA 4060/A/01/001, 14 May 1844.

<sup>122</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 14 May 1844.

<sup>123</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 11 June 1844.

championing prestige' the LRSU quickly expanded.<sup>124</sup>

By its second annual meeting in July 1846 the LRSU oversaw 26 schools, attended by 2600 children and 250 teachers.<sup>125</sup> Four years later these figures had risen to 94 schools, overseen by 1350 volunteer teachers and 156 paid.<sup>126</sup> In 1860 it was reported in *The Times*:

that the number of Sunday schools in connection with the Union is now 199, with an average attendance of 24,860 scholars. There are also 146 day schools, with an average attendance of 15,869 scholars, and 215 evening schools, with an average attendance of 9,059, making a total of 560 schools, and 49,290 scholars.<sup>127</sup>

The same report stated that the number of voluntary teachers was now 2,690, alongside 400 paid. By 1870 each of these figures had risen; Sunday schools had increased by 24 per cent and the total number of scholars by 26 per cent (Appendix B: Figure 2).<sup>128</sup> This steady increase was checked following the passing of the English Education Act in 1870, closely followed by the Scottish Education Act in 1872. The new legislation resulted in the establishment of locally elected school boards to supplement educational provision in deprived areas. Board schools had the authority to enforce attendance; Stephens notes that 'by 1873 some 40 per cent of the population lived in school-board districts where attendance was obligatory'.<sup>129</sup> In 1872 readers of the *RSUM* were told that the establishment of Board schools had 'engaged the anxious attention of your Committee', who were concerned regarding the 'position and

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<sup>124</sup> Montague, p. 164.

<sup>125</sup> 'The Ragged School Union', *Derby Mercury*, 17 July 1846.

<sup>126</sup> The Sixth Annual Report provides the number of scholars attending each class as follows: 5174 at day classes during the week, 5093 at evening classes during the week, and 10,366 on Sunday evenings. These figures make it difficult to estimate the number of children attending the schools as it is likely many scholars attended more than one category of class. Nevertheless, it highlights the significant growth that had taken place. 'Brief Abstract of the Sixth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1850), p. 155.

<sup>127</sup> 'Ragged School Union', *The Times*, 8 May 1860.

<sup>128</sup> 'Outline of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1870), p. 124.

<sup>129</sup> Stephens, p. 79.

prospects of the Ragged School Union'.<sup>130</sup> By 1874 the impact of the Education Act was clear, certainly in relation to schools in the metropolis. The LRSU reported that 39 ragged schools with 8,871 scholars had become Board Schools, 6 schools with 1,409 scholars had become fee-paying schools, and 26 schools with 3,096 scholars had 'closed, fearing loss of support'.<sup>131</sup> The Education Act marked the commencement of the movement's decline (Appendix B: Figure 1).

As the movement grew the diversity of services offered grew also. The earliest institutions offered only weekday evening or Sunday afternoon and evening classes; however, as the number of scholars and teachers increased many expanded to provide classes during week days as well. Wesley Bready's biography of Shaftesbury refers to the 'legion' of groups and organisations that emerged in association with the schools: mother's meetings, ragged churches, nurseries, penny banks, lending-libraries, drum and fife bands, hostels for apprenticed boys, and soup kitchens.<sup>132</sup> The schools catered for children of a wide range of ages. In February 1846, during a meeting of the LRSU chaired by John Laurie, the Sheriff of London, it was stated that children aged between eight and fifteen attended the schools.<sup>133</sup> Just four months later, during the LRSU's second annual meeting, Shaftesbury recited that children between the ages of five and seventeen attended one unnamed Sunday evening school, which was 'a sample for all of the rest'.<sup>134</sup> Two years later he noted that 'an examination of fifteen schools' again confirmed that the ages of scholars 'ranged between

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<sup>130</sup> 'Outline of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1872), p. 124.

<sup>131</sup> 'Outline of the Thirtieth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1874), p. 125.

<sup>132</sup> Wesley Bready, p. 162. See also Heasman, pp. 79-82.

<sup>133</sup> 'The Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 21 February 1846.

<sup>134</sup> 'The Ragged School Union', *The Times*, 10 June 1846, p. 8.

five and seventeen years'.<sup>135</sup> By 1850 the Lamb and Flag school held infant classes during week days in addition to Sunday classes and children from three years upwards attended on a regular basis.<sup>136</sup> The same year, Greenock ragged school recorded that 57 per cent of its 98 scholars were aged ten or younger.<sup>137</sup>

Unlike Church and Sunday schools, ragged schools determinedly avoided denominational conflicts. The names given to schools are the plainest expression of the movement's ecumenicalism; streets and regions were used to identify schools, rather than churches. Catechisms were excluded from the classroom and the Bible was the sole religious script consulted. Further, concerns regarding the danger of religious divisions informed the local connections that schools made. In February 1844, shortly prior to the founding of the LRSU, the Field Lane committee severed its connection to the Union of Scottish churches in London in response to their decision to 'unite themselves with the "Presbyterian Union"'. It was decided that a partnership with the Presbyterian Union was inappropriate given the school's profession 'to act on the broad principles of Christianity, without reference to sect or party'.<sup>138</sup> The *RSUM* similarly affirmed that ragged school teachers were 'members of a great evangelical alliance, not merely recognising each other as brethren on the platform and then virtually ending with mere talk, but working together in the schoolroom'.<sup>139</sup> In 1870 the LRSU referenced the movement's proud history of religious tolerance, noting that they had 'never experienced in the practical work of Ragged Schools what is called "the religious

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<sup>135</sup> 'Ragged School Emigration', *Examiner*, 10 June 1848.

<sup>136</sup> 'The Lamb and Flag Ragged School', *The Times*, 2 May 1850, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> *Greenock Ragged School Second Annual Report, 1850-1851* (Greenock: Greenock Ragged School Association, 1851), p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 13 February 1844.

<sup>139</sup> 'Our Principles: A Review', *RSUM* (January 1869), p. 2.



difficulty,” and yet the teachers in the Schools have been, and still are, the members of every evangelical church in the kingdom’.<sup>140</sup> When looking back over the movement Montague praised its anti-sectarian heritage, describing it as a ‘practical and solid achievement’ despite the ‘controversies that have divided and still divide English Protestants’.<sup>141</sup> Their resolutely ecumenical organisation set ragged schools apart and enabled them to avoid the inter-denominational challenges that both Church and Sunday schools faced. On a more practical level, it enlarged the pool of volunteers that could be drawn on and provided access to public support from across the Protestant community.

It is unsurprising that a premium was placed on learning to read within ragged schools. As was the case in Sunday schools, enabling children to study Scripture was a core aspiration of the ragged school movement. Reading was encouraged through the *OCM*, which, as well as being widely available to purchase, was given out during ragged school gatherings.<sup>142</sup> In January 1862 the *OCM* commenced with an affectionate note to its audience:

My Dear Readers,

I am happy to call you “readers,” not so much as “*my*” readers, or readers of my book, as that you are readers. That you can read, and it is hoped read *well*, which is no small boon to be called your own.<sup>143</sup>

Reading was declared a skill to be proud of, its usefulness asserted in the description that it was ‘no small boon’. Despite the anxieties about writing that Evans, Laqueur, and Sanderson reference, ragged school children were encouraged to learn to write. In 1859 the *RSUM*

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<sup>140</sup> ‘Outline of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (June 1870), p. 124.

<sup>141</sup> Montague, p. 148.

<sup>142</sup> Ragged school teachers could purchase copies of the *OCM* with a significant discount direct from the LRSU office in Exeter Hall. ‘Advertisements’, *RSUM* (November 1864), p. i.

<sup>143</sup> ‘Editor’s Note’, *OCM* (January 1862), p. iv.

advised teachers ‘See to it that your pupils are good writers; make this matter your special concern’, adding ‘teach your scholars that their handwriting expresses their thoughts, and is regarded as the transcript of their mind’.<sup>144</sup> The *OCM* aimed to inspire children to write, asking its readers:

Why should some of you boys, by industry and perseverance, not become good writers, and so get a good living by writing books. Let some of you try, and I promise, if you send me anything good, I will have it printed and published for you very soon.

It was of practical use for ragged school children to be able to write; when the LRSU established a rag-collecting brigade in 1862 scholars were informed through the *OCM* that those wishing to be employed ‘must be able to read and write, and keep account of the moneys entrusted to them’.<sup>145</sup> Despite such encouragement, writing nevertheless retained a sense of moral danger. After being instructed to ‘write neatly and legibly’, readers of the *OCM* in August 1867 were solemnly warned never to write ‘anything of which they will be ashamed when they come to die’.<sup>146</sup> The freedom that writing facilitated could be either a blessing or a curse; it could lead to stable employment and a wider education or the articulation of undesirable ideas.

In those rare instances in which ragged school literacy levels may be glimpsed, as in the Field Lane casebook or emigrant letters, it is evident that abilities ranged widely.<sup>147</sup> The skills and convictions of teachers likely influenced the education that children received, which may explain the Lamb and Flag school’s observation that boys excelled in writing while girls

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<sup>144</sup> ‘Self-Education’, *RSUM* (1859), p. 200.

<sup>145</sup> ‘The Rag-Collecting Brigade’, *OCM* (February 1862), p. 25.

<sup>146</sup> ‘About Writing Materials’, *OCM* (August 1867), p. 119.

<sup>147</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A. Casebook of Emigrant Boys from Field Lane.

were better at reading.<sup>148</sup> Further, the movement frequently decried the negative impact poor attendance had upon the children's learning; Hall, like many other ragged school commentators, noted 'Whether it be reading, writing, sewing, tailoring, or shoemaking, the lesson is only half learnt'.<sup>149</sup> Yet, given the inconsistencies in Anglican schools that Evans describes, Montague's claim that some ragged school children read better than those paying fees in Church schools is believable.<sup>150</sup>

### ***'A Recognized Social Movement': Forging Schools and Histories***

The ragged school movement was not initiated by events in London, rather the LRSU was symptomatic of efforts taking place in urban centres across the nation. Clark's argument that 'There was not one ragged school movement, however, but several' and that 'the London and Scottish schools had little in common except their name' derives from his belief that there was little connection between the two.<sup>151</sup> Clark presents a binary picture in which the London and Scottish schools competed for glory while the smaller, apparently less organised institutions elsewhere are of marginal interest. On closer inspection it is evident that schools forged significant links across cities and countries that disregarded physical distance. Although it is difficult to establish accurate figures concerning the movement outside the metropolis, the organised unions formed elsewhere provide important details. In 1847, the same year that Guthrie began his school in Edinburgh, the Liverpool ragged schools formed

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<sup>148</sup> 'The Lamb and Flag Ragged School', *The Times*, 2 May 1850, p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> G. Hall, p. 39.

<sup>150</sup> Evans, p. 290.

<sup>151</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', pp. 8-9.

their own union, which was referred to by the *RSUM* as a ‘companion in labour’.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, the Manchester ragged schools established the ‘Manchester Sunday Evening Ragged School Union’ following a general meeting of teachers and supporters in April 1858.<sup>153</sup> At the time of the meeting there were nine schools in the Manchester area with an average attendance of 2,342 scholars under the guidance of 347 teachers.<sup>154</sup> The following year the above figures had grown to twelve schools with 447 teachers and ‘very little short of 5,000’ scholars.<sup>155</sup> Montague helpfully includes a map of Britain that marks the towns and cities that boasted ragged schools in 1851, including, among others, Perth, Dundee, Glasgow, York, Sheffield, Chester, Nottingham, Bath, and Brighton (Appendix A: Figure 5).<sup>156</sup> Montague’s map, however, is a skeletal template of the movement. It does not feature the Greenock ragged school that was established in 1849 and it is fair to assume that other institutions are absent also. Moreover, the map does not indicate the number of schools that populated the named locations or any idea regarding the size of the institutions.<sup>157</sup>

There were certainly differences between the English and Scottish schools. As Heasman has noted, Scottish institutions provided meals while the practice in English schools varied widely.<sup>158</sup> Whether or not food should be gratuitously available was debated in England, as concerns regarding dependency led many to argue that meals should be granted as treats during the festive season. Such differences are, however, outweighed by the shared philosophy and heritage that connected the schools. Sheriff Watson’s Aberdeen schools were

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<sup>152</sup> ‘Liverpool Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (October 1850), p. 250.

<sup>153</sup> ‘The Manchester Sunday Evening Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (July 1858), p. 136.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>155</sup> ‘The Manchester Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (September 1859), p. 185.

<sup>156</sup> Montague, p. 211.

<sup>157</sup> ‘Scottish Ragged Schools’, *RSUM* (January 1855), p. 225.

<sup>158</sup> Heasman, pp. 74–75.

regularly acknowledged as a significant influence on the movement in both Scotland and England.<sup>159</sup> In relation to Watson, Guthrie writes that his own Edinburgh venture had been ‘Encouraged by the success of Sheriff Watson’, who he described as having ‘the honour to lead this enterprise’.<sup>160</sup> Guthrie took note of Watson’s methods and accomplishments; the appendix of his *Plea for Ragged Schools* included material from the Aberdeen schools’ annual reports.<sup>161</sup> Further south the newly founded *RSUM* cited Watson’s ‘admirable efforts’ in its first edition, published in January 1849.<sup>162</sup> Following this, both the February and March issues commenced with Watson’s words by serialising his account of the first Aberdeen school’s commencement.<sup>163</sup> Just as Watson’s writing was available to those in England, Guthrie likewise proved an authority on ragged schools – so much so that he earned a reputation as the movement’s ‘apostle’ during his lifetime.<sup>164</sup> According to Montague, ‘Dr. Guthrie’s books were much read in England’, a fact also indicated in the *Daily News*’s comment that his *Plea* had ‘attracted much attention here in London’, going through ‘seven editions in the course of a few weeks’.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, Guthrie’s Edinburgh school proved a source of inspiration at a

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<sup>159</sup> In 1872 Watson wrote that ‘the English system of evening ragged schools has not found favour with the calculating and practical Scot’. He argued that in conducting classes in the evening juvenile delinquency was insufficiently combatted. Rather, Watson’s school commenced early in the morning and provided food for its young attendants. Watson, p. 9. Guthrie’s *Plea* gives details of the Aberdeen routine in the boys’ school: ‘The children assemble at seven in the morning (in summer), and are occupied in school, reading and writing, till half-past eight; from half-past eight to nine, recreation; breakfast of oatmeal pottage and milk, at nine; followed by morning worship, – singing, reading the Scriptures, and prayer [...] Supper of pottage and milk or treacle, at a quarter past seven, followed by evening worship; and at a quarter to eight they are dismissed to return to their homes’. Guthrie, *Plea for Ragged Schools*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>160</sup> Guthrie, *Plea for Ragged Schools*, p. 13.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>162</sup> ‘The Ragged School Union: Its Objects and its Claims’, *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 7.

<sup>163</sup> ‘Industrial Schools for the Destitute, Aberdeen’, *RSUM* (February 1849), p. 21, ‘Industrial Schools for the Destitute, Aberdeen’, *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 41.

<sup>164</sup> This title, inscribed upon his statue in Edinburgh’s Princes Street Gardens, was given to Guthrie by Samuel Smiles. Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help; with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance* (London: Murray, 1896), p. 366.

<sup>165</sup> Montague, p.39, ‘The Rev. Mr. Guthrie on Government Education’, *Daily News*, 21 April 1847.

meeting of the London RSSBS in November 1851 when Locke told how boys in Scotland's capital acted as 'ticket porters to carry parcels' to prove they were 'worthy of being trusted' before being employed as Shoeblocks.<sup>166</sup>

In opening the first three issues of the newly established *RSUM* with references to the Aberdeen schools, the publication quickly set the tone that it sought to present a broader geographical scope of the ragged school mission and achievements than its London base. The publication informed readers in the introduction to its first issue that it would be 'a medium of awakening or sustaining interest' and it was intended that 'extensively diffused information upon its results and benefits' would make the movement 'greater'.<sup>167</sup> During the fifth annual meeting of the LRSU the establishment of the *RSUM* was referenced triumphantly by Shaftesbury, who, after praising God for his work, told those gathered 'We have also, and I see it before me, a Magazine. We have pressed the literature of the country into our service'.<sup>168</sup> To schools in the metropolis the LRSU was a guiding and authoritative body; through print culture the LRSU was critical in spreading the ragged school template further afield. The commencement of its monthly *RSUM* in 1849 marked a watershed moment in the movement's development. Although produced in London, it was available across the country. When the *Ragged School Children's Magazine* began in 1850, rechristened the *OCM* in 1851, it provided 'intellectual food' for all poor children, wherever they resided, as well as a template from which teachers could work.<sup>169</sup> Both magazines featured in the literary notices of a variety of local newspapers, including the *Blackburn Standard*, *Dundee Courier*, and the *Lancaster Gazette*.

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<sup>166</sup> 'Ragged School Shoe Black society', *Daily News*, 1 November 1851.

<sup>167</sup> 'Introduction', *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 1.

<sup>168</sup> 'Proceedings at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1849), p. 105.

<sup>169</sup> 'The Ragged School Tree', *RSUM* (August 1856), p. 146.

It was not only ideas and publications that migrated; people did also. Migrating teachers and supporters brought ideas and experiences obtained elsewhere with them, thereby enriching local schools. Successful institutions acted as centres of inspiration akin to pilgrimage destinations, sending forth passionate and knowledgeably-equipped individuals. For instance, on 20 April 1847 those present at the Field Lane committee meeting listened to a letter read from a gentleman in York ‘who had visited the School’ while in London and proceeded to establish one in his home city.<sup>170</sup> When it was decided to commence a ragged school in Newcastle in July 1847 those on the committee decided to contact the Edinburgh ragged school and request ‘for Mr Jack Murray, one of the best teachers, to spend a few days in Newcastle’ in order to provide ‘advice on organisation and teaching’. The visit evidently proved beneficial to both parties, as Murray proceeded to leave Scotland to commence the role of ‘first master’ at the Newcastle ragged school.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, Starey, formerly mentioned because of his key role in founding the LRSU, relocated to Nottingham for ‘business engagements’ and went on to establish a ragged school in the city in February 1846. Ten years after the school’s commencement Starey’s efforts were praised in the *RSUM*, which declared that he ‘has been the instrument in forming and raising to its present prosperous position the Institution under our notice’.<sup>172</sup> Fourteen years later Shaftesbury travelled to Nottingham to formally open a number of new schools, demonstrating through action the association between the LRSU and those institutions beyond their geographical scope.<sup>173</sup>

The history of the ragged schools is muddled by the movement’s own narrative.

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<sup>170</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/003, 27 April 1847.

<sup>171</sup> Prahms, p. 32.

<sup>172</sup> ‘Nottingham Ragged School’, *RSUM* (June 1856), p. 104.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Opening of the New Ragged Schools, Nottingham’, *RSUM* (January 1860), p. 11.

Although their innovative nature was frequently asserted, as, for instance, at the LRSU's fifth annual meeting where they were described as 'an institution of our own times, more modern than railroads', their historicity and rich inheritance was also commonly referenced.<sup>174</sup> This component of the movement's discourse is identified by Swain and Hillel, who note that the schools 'quickly developed a keen sense of their own history'.<sup>175</sup> The very first edition of the *RSUM*, published in 1849, defined the schools as 'a *recognized social movement*', arguing 'Their past and their present are a *great fact*'.<sup>176</sup> In asserting the appropriateness of the word 'movement' as well as placing emphasis through italics, the maiden *RSUM* hints that the significance or coherence of the movement had been questioned. Historical narratives wove the movement into the nation's educational tapestry. In 1860, in an article entitled 'The Origin of the Ragged Schools', the *RSUM* claimed that 'there is no one individual that could be named as the originator or founder of these institutions now conducted'.<sup>177</sup> Rather, it referenced several 'noble men' that bore partial credit for the ragged school enterprise.

The Sunday school system, by this point deeply entrenched in British society, was frequently cited as an ancestor of the ragged school movement. The movement was undoubtedly influenced by Raikes's template; both provided a free education and held classes on Sundays. The close association between the two caused them to be elided together in the report on education presented to parliament in 1850, which described ragged schools as 'simply a recommencement of the Sunday-school mission'. The report stated that the 'great body of the Ragged-schools are still simply Sunday-schools, with a few week-day evening

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<sup>174</sup> 'Proceedings at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1849), p. 115.

<sup>175</sup> Swain and Hillel, p. 9.

<sup>176</sup> 'Introduction', *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 1.

<sup>177</sup> 'The Origin of Ragged Schools', *RSUM* (November 1860), p. 241.



meetings'.<sup>178</sup> Yet, from its outset the LRSU was keen to distinguish itself from the Sunday School Union (SSU). At a meeting in February 1846 it was stated that ragged schools were intended for those children 'whose abject wretchedness, or whose depraved character, precludes them from participating in the advantages of the Sunday schools'.<sup>179</sup> In 1855 Hall noted that the burgeoning ragged school movement had drawn on Sunday school principles, while simultaneously incorporating new ideas. He wrote that ragged school teachers 'saw the excellences of the old Sunday School system and were not ashamed to copy them', while at the same time being alert to its 'defects' and keen to avoid them. On this basis he argues that ragged school teachers 'grafted into the good old tree their new ideas', producing a separate and distinct branch upon the evangelical education tree.<sup>180</sup> Notably, the SSU likewise affirmed their distinction from the LRSU. William H. Watson, the secretary of the SSU, wrote in 1862 that Sunday schools were 'the precursors' to ragged schools.<sup>181</sup> This remark, although suggesting a common root and claiming some credit for the later ragged school movement, nevertheless stresses a distinction between the two organisations.

Pounds's Portsmouth school was cited above; following his death in 1839 he was frequently resurrected in ragged school discourse. Pounds was mentioned in connection with the schools early in the movement's development; during a lecture on the ragged schools 'to a numerous assembly' at Newport in July 1848, just four years after the LRSU was established, it was categorically stated that the movement originated from the work of Pounds.<sup>182</sup> The

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<sup>178</sup> *Committee of Council on Education*: PP. 1848-50, 1849 (1215) (1216) XLIII.214, XLIV.1. p. 296.

<sup>179</sup> 'The Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 21 February 1846.

<sup>180</sup> G. Hall, p. 46.

<sup>181</sup> W.H. Watson, *The first fifty years of the Sunday school* (London: Sunday School Union, 1862), p. 50. William H. Watson should not be confused with Sheriff William Watson.

<sup>182</sup> 'Ragged Schools: Lecture at Newport', *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian*, 8 July 1848, p. 3. It is noteworthy that this lecture was given by James Ware, the brother of Martin Ware.

following year the *Liverpool Mercury* featured an article formerly published in the *Christian Reformer* entitled 'John Pounds, the Founder of Ragged Schools'. The article referred to Pounds's class of impoverished scholars as his 'ragged school', utilising terminology only created following his death.<sup>183</sup> In his thesis on the schools, Webster writes that the 'precise role of John Pounds in the history of the Ragged School Movement is obscure'.<sup>184</sup> He notes the almost mythical character that Pounds became, writing that 'within a couple of years of his death the exalted stereotype of the simple, homespun saint had replaced the real human being'.<sup>185</sup> Pounds became the figurehead of the ragged school movement, his legacy of humility and compassion encapsulating the ragged school vision. Although those involved in ragged schools likely admired the work of Raikes and Pounds, the claims made across ragged school discourse fulfilled a more significant function than acknowledging inspiration. In identifying the roots of the ragged school movement in the institutions of Raikes and Pounds, both its coherence as '*a recognized social movement*' and its eminence within British society was affirmed.<sup>186</sup> Such narratives strengthened and historicised the movement, encouraging the public to perceive the schools as part of a trajectory of educational progress.

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<sup>183</sup> 'John Pounds, the Founder of Ragged Schools', *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 June 1849.

<sup>184</sup> Webster, p. 14.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>186</sup> 'Introduction', *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 1.

## **‘Necessity Knows No Law’: Means and Mortar**

The trait common to most ragged schools was the nature of location selected. The schools were to be in the midst of poor localities, ‘situated conveniently for the class of children they are intended for; that is in the densest and poorest parts of town’.<sup>187</sup> Accordingly, the *British Mother’s Magazine* told its readers that the movement ‘sought out [the] worst haunts’ in which to establish schools.<sup>188</sup> The *RSUM* described how the children attending St. Giles ragged school in London came ‘from many a dark alley, filthy court, and wretched cellar’ in the area.<sup>189</sup> In 1848 a meeting was held in connection with the recently established school in Great Wild Street. Those present were informed that ‘the state of the poor in Great Wild-street might be judged of from the following statistics:- in 155 houses were found 700 families, containing 1500 souls’.<sup>190</sup> Playing on the street’s name, in 1853 the *RSUM* described the residents as ‘wild as the absence of sanitary and Gospel effort could make them’.<sup>191</sup> Two years later the publication described the ‘dwellings’ in Great Wild Street as ‘almost beyond description’. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to convey the scene’s horror by detailing the ‘offensive effluvia’ that emanated from basements that had accumulated ‘animal and vegetable matters’ and ‘the latrines’ that ‘were quite exposed, and singularly offensive’.<sup>192</sup> Descriptions like that of Great Wild Street regularly featured in both the *RSUM* and in newspaper reports, forming a core component of the ‘vivid word pictures’ that Swain and

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<sup>187</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 22 April 1846.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Ragged Schools of London’, *British Mother’s Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p. 48.

<sup>189</sup> ‘The St. Giles’s Rookery, and its Ragged schools’, *RSUM* (January 1853), p. 154.

<sup>190</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *Standard*, 8 June 1848.

<sup>191</sup> ‘Wild Court, Present and Prospective’, *RSUM* (January 1853), p. 229.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Wild Court, Past and Present’, *RSUM* (January 1855), p. 190.

Hillel reference in their analysis of ragged school discourse.<sup>193</sup> Writing in 1871, William Weldon Champneys, rector at Whitechapel and teacher in his local ragged school, stated his belief ‘that the children *are* the school’, and that the character of the building was ‘comparatively of small importance’. This statement aptly summarises the general attitude adopted towards the buildings used; the only qualification Champneys made was that the space chosen should ‘hold them comfortably’.<sup>194</sup> The rooms were to be fit for purpose, not ‘on a large scale; not grand or expensive, but plain, substantial, airy structures’, of ‘moderate size, with a fire-place, and a few plain forms’ that could hold a large number.<sup>195</sup> Until such buildings could be obtained, Hall advised schools to use ‘the most convenient places that can be had’.<sup>196</sup>

Because of financial constraints many schools were innovative in the spaces used. According to the *RSUM*, ‘necessity knows no law’, and consequently there was little restriction on the venues occupied.<sup>197</sup> Many schools held different classes within the same large room, with screens separating the groups but doing nothing to dumb the noise. Old stables, covered railway arches, and storerooms all acted as makeshift ragged schools. Such tired and patched venues often compromised comfort. Brill school suffered an ‘unpleasant smell from the stable below’, while Ogle Mews scholars met in a ‘dilapidated’ workshop above a stable where ‘the stench from below and the wet from above’ frequently disrupted classes.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Swain and Hillel, p. 9.

<sup>194</sup> William Weldon Champneys, ‘The Power of the Resurrection: A Sketch of the Life and Works of Henry Adams, a Whitechapel Ragged Schoolteacher’ (London: Macintosh, 1871), p. 31.

<sup>195</sup> G. Hall, p. 62, ‘Multiple News Items’, *Standard*, 12 June 1845, p. 4.

<sup>196</sup> G. Hall, p. 62.

<sup>197</sup> ‘Ward’s Place, Lower Road, Islington’, *RSUM* (January 1859), p. 10.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Special Appeal: The Brill Ragged School’, *RSUM* (June 1862), ‘Ogle Mews, Marylebone’, *RSUM* (October 1862), p. 232.

Rain was also a problem in the first building occupied by Ward's Place school, where water 'dropped through the roof, streamed down the walls over the desks, and on to the floor'.<sup>199</sup> Likewise, Ware made several references to the leaks in the original Compton Place building. He noted in July 1852 that the school was 'rather empty in consequence of heavy storms', before adding 'The rain comes through the roof terribly'.<sup>200</sup> Almost a year later, he wrote of a school committee meeting that he 'could get nothing decided about the repairs to the roof'.<sup>201</sup> The Greenock ragged school annual report for 1866 reveals that the school was similarly uncomfortable, as the building compromised warmth in favour of 'full ventilation'. When Reverend Sydney Turner, a government inspector, visited the school in 1869 he commented on 'the coldness of the rooms' and advised that the ceilings should be lowered to conserve heat.<sup>202</sup>

It is unsurprising that many buildings posed risks to safety. When describing Whitechapel ragged school, Champneys wrote that it was 'a deserted coach-factory, the very dry bones and simple skeleton of itself', with 'nothing but the bare walls, floors, and ladders (for it would be too great a stretch of courtesy to call them stairs)'.<sup>203</sup> There were several instances of the buildings utilised proving structurally unsound. Perhaps associated with the rain that 'streamed down the walls', Ward's Place experienced 'Occasional and unexpected descents of plaster', that presented 'imminent danger to the craniums below'.<sup>204</sup> The Field

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<sup>199</sup> 'Ward's Place, Lower Road, Islington', *RSUM* (January 1859), p. 11.

<sup>200</sup> SHC 1585/2, 25 July 1852.

<sup>201</sup> SHC 1585/3, 3 June 1853.

<sup>202</sup> *Greenock Ragged School Seventeenth Annual Report, 1865-66* (Greenock: Greenock Ragged School Association, 1866), p. 8, *Greenock Ragged School Twentieth Annual Report, 1868-69* (Greenock: Greenock Ragged School Association, 1869), p. 8.

<sup>203</sup> Champneys, 'The Power of the Resurrection', p. 32.

<sup>204</sup> 'Ward Place, Lower Road, Islington', *RSUM* (January 1859), pp. 10-11.

Lane committee minutes reveal the concerns about heavy machinery used by the school's neighbours; one teacher informed the committee he had posted a letter to their neighbour 'complaining of the great vibration & annoyance' it caused.<sup>205</sup> The following month the committee was informed that the adjacent machinery 'has so shaken a portion of the wall, (which many of the children had to pass, in coming to the school) as to cause it to fall, greatly blocking up the pathway'.<sup>206</sup> Structural problems also endangered those in Great Wild Street. On 9 September 1853 the *Daily News* featured an article entitled 'Falling of a Portion of Great Wild Street Ragged School', which described how 'one of the floors of the Ragged School in Brewer's-court' collapsed during a meeting, causing 'intense anxiety' for those present. It noted that the building itself was 'very old' and had been unable to sustain the numbers gathered.<sup>207</sup>

In addition to structural problems ragged school classrooms also often posed the danger of spreading infections, although this was rarely highlighted in promotional literature. It was likely the fear of disease that caused Greenock school's preference for ventilation rather than warmth, while the Tenth Annual Report of Helensburgh ragged school noted the 'prevalence of gastric fever &c.'.<sup>208</sup> *The Platform Saying, Anecdotes, and Stories of Thomas Guthrie*, published in 1864, is one of the few examples of publications referencing illnesses within ragged schools. It references a severe measles outbreak in the Edinburgh school, stating that of the 55 children that contracted the illness, only two had beds at home.<sup>209</sup> Ware annually

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<sup>205</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, 12 October 1857.

<sup>206</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, 11 November 1857.

<sup>207</sup> 'Falling of a Portion of Great Wild Street Ragged School', *Daily News*, 9 September 1853.

<sup>208</sup> Glasgow City Archive (GCA) CO4/6/5/1/1, Helensburgh Ragged School, Trustees Minutes Book, 1860-1870, 'Tenth Annual Report, 1860-1861'.

<sup>209</sup> *Platform Sayings, Anecdotes, and Stories of Thomas Guthrie D.D.* (Edinburgh: Lorimer and Gillies, 1864), p. 25.

remarked, normally at the beginning of the school year in August, that he had arranged for the classroom to be ‘whitewashed’ or ‘limewashed’. In May 1861, considerably earlier than usual, Ware arranged for the school to ‘be whitewashed & cleaned’ after learning that a teacher’s two ‘little girls have an attack of scarlatina’.<sup>210</sup> Ware’s caution regarding diseases, in particular his frequent practice of quarantining ill scholars, is unlikely to have been found in every school.

Although the *RSUM* proclaimed Field Lane ‘one of the best and most efficiently conducted efforts connected with the Ragged School Union’, the institution’s committee minutes reveal the private battle it waged against disease on its premises.<sup>211</sup> On 1 April 1852 the school’s committee resolved that a sub-committee be appointed to ‘consider the state of the Refuge, especially as regards the cause or causes of the illness prevailing’. Reflecting the religious fervour of the teachers, a prayer meeting was to be ‘immediately held’ in order ‘to seek Divine instruction & to pray for the sick’.<sup>212</sup> The cleanliness of the school was again brought into question the following year when Miss Hughes, a ‘devoted day-school teacher’, died following a short illness. A memorial article featured in the *RSUM* stated that during the school’s annual meeting on 4 May 1853 Miss Hughes ‘complained of being very ill; but the friends who gathered on the occasion, little thought they should never see her again till “clothed upon” with her “glorious body”’. It is notable that the article mentioned the fact that the school was ‘closed for cleansing’; however, no other link between Miss Hughes’s

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<sup>210</sup> SHC 1585/6, 29 May 1861.

<sup>211</sup> ‘Our Homeless Poor’, *RSUM* (February 1859), p. 21.

<sup>212</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/004, 1 April 1852.

illness and the institution was made.<sup>213</sup> Privately, however, Miss Hughes's death triggered an investigation by the school's committee into the conditions in the school and refuge. During a meeting on 25 May it was decided that Miss Hughes's funeral expenses should be covered by the institution. Moreover, it was also decided that the opinions of several doctors should be sought as to whether 'the Refuge as at present conducted is calculated to produce illness', and it was noted that chloride and lime would be used to clean the rooms.<sup>214</sup>

### **'The Sinews of Our Ragged School Movement': Teachers and Social Class**

The ragged school system was reliant on an army of teachers, the majority of whom fulfilled their roles voluntarily. At the twelfth annual meeting of the LRSU the report detailed that there was a total of 2118 voluntary teachers and just 332 who were paid.<sup>215</sup> Two years later, at the annual gathering of teachers, volunteer teachers were commended as having been 'and are, and ever must be, the strength of the movement'.<sup>216</sup> Clark writes of 'the silent testimony of voluntary effort' when referencing those individuals who met 'evening after evening, Sunday after Sunday, in tiny, ill-lit, often unheated rooms, full of smells and vermin'.<sup>217</sup> Nevertheless, one of the most prominent difficulties the institutions faced was the impossibility of both obtaining and retaining staff; this problem in itself hints at the demanding nature of the job. Whether paid or voluntary, teachers faced daily challenges in

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<sup>213</sup> "'Faint, Yet Pursuing": Brief Memoir of the Late Miss Jane M. Hughes, the Devoted Day School Teacher of the "Field Lane Ragged School"', *RSUM* (January 1854), pp. 135-137.

<sup>214</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/004, 25 May 1853.

<sup>215</sup> 'Meeting of Paid Teachers', *RSUM* (January 1856), p. 10.

<sup>216</sup> 'Paid Teachers and their Annual Meeting', *RSUM* (May 1858), p. 92.

<sup>217</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 291.



ragged school classrooms.

The dominant image of the ragged school teacher within the *RSUM* was that of a middle-class man. When providing 'A Sketch' of a teacher in April 1869, the subject chosen was 'a gentlemanly man', a widower, who regularly left his 'comfortable fireside' to teach in his local ragged school.<sup>218</sup> The visibility of such aristocratic figures as Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Brougham, and Lord Kinnaid, alongside distinctly upper middle-class individuals such as the distinguished judge Joseph Payne, may be interpreted as an indicator that those involved were distinctly moneyed and of high status. Historical research on the wider child-saving movement of which the schools were a part stresses that its roots were to be found in middle-class ideals and fears. Platt argues that 'Child saving was essentially a middle-class movement', which was 'launched by the "leisure class" on behalf of those less fortunately placed in the social order'.<sup>219</sup> Yet, such interpretations are problematic when viewed alongside the claims of early historians of the schools that they overrode class boundaries. Both Reid Howatt and Montague stressed the collaborative nature of the work. When describing the teachers Reid Howatt noted that many were 'poor themselves', while Montague wrote that class disparities 'did not in the least interfere with the welding together of workers in widely differing social positions'.<sup>220</sup> Montague placed a particular emphasis on the teachers' backgrounds, perhaps on account of his own history as a ragged school scholar, and emphasised the variety of professions represented.<sup>221</sup> He further stressed the positive cross-class relations that the schools promoted, noting how 'In some of the early schools might have been seen cobblers

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<sup>218</sup> 'The Teacher's Column: All for Jesus: A Sketch', *RSUM* (April 1869), p. 90.

<sup>219</sup> Platt, *The Child Savers*, p. 77.

<sup>220</sup> Reid Howatt, p. 43, Montague, p. 106.

<sup>221</sup> Montague, p. 32.

and tailors teaching side by side with merchants and bankers and men of private means, liberal education and abundant leisure'.<sup>222</sup>

Accounts of impoverished teachers likewise featured in promotional pamphlets, which gave accounts of Christ-like teachers whose poverty and ill health did not disrupt their calling to work with impoverished children. Although middle-class men were predominantly cast in the role of ragged school teachers across the movement's discourse, the narrative of the poor teacher was nevertheless present. In 1869 the *RSUM* told the story of 'a poor tinker, suffering from heart disease' who converted his humble home in a school for impoverished children. The article related how 'Oft-times he went without tea in order to find money to buy candles' and continued in this work 'for two or three years unknown' until Shaftesbury was made aware of his case, after which he ensured that the tinker was able to 'lease and adapt more fitting premises'.<sup>223</sup> Most relevant on this matter, however, are the publications of Champneys, whose prolific writing on the movement raised support for the Whitechapel ragged schools. The title of his short pamphlet "'She Hath Done What She Could": The Story of a Deceased Ragged School Teacher' echoed Christ's words in Mark 14:8, closely connecting holiness and poverty from its commencement. The tract told the story of 'Mary McD', a 'humble Sister in Christ', whom he had worked alongside in the Whitechapel ragged schools until her untimely death from an unspecified illness.<sup>224</sup> She was deemed a prime example of 'self denial' and 'quiet perseverance', having toiled through the night as a

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>223</sup> 'Founders of Ragged Schools', *RSUM* (August 1869), pp. 170-171.

<sup>224</sup> Champneys, "'She Hath Done What She Could": The Story of a Deceased Ragged School Teacher' (London: Macintosh, 1853), p. 4.

needlewoman upon finishing school in the evening.<sup>225</sup> After describing her ‘poor little chamber’, Champneys imagined how ‘in the cold winter nights’ she had ‘toiled at her needle to earn not a *living* – but just enough to keep her from starving’.<sup>226</sup> Again, the linking of poverty and holiness was asserted in Champneys’s remark that he ‘could not but think that there was moral grandeur about that poor room, as the last earthly dwelling of a child of God’.<sup>227</sup> In another pamphlet, ‘The Power of the Resurrection’, Champneys told the story of Henry Adams, a formerly drunken labourer who became a much-loved ragged school teacher.<sup>228</sup> Through the biography of Adams readers learned that the schools transformed the lives of both poor children and impoverished adults alike. Champneys’s pamphlets demonstrate one way in which ragged school teachers were depicted to the public. Champneys’s writing is moving and persuasive, and, given its fundraising function, was intended to be so.

The presence of teachers from all ranks of society was symptomatic of the success of the movement in alleviating tension between the classes. Poor ragged school teachers were a spectacle of success, symbolic of God’s wide kingdom work on earth. The poor ragged school

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<sup>225</sup> The suffering of seamstresses, or ‘needlewomen’, had been well documented when Champneys penned this pamphlet in 1853. Reports with titles such as ‘The Over-Wrought Needlewoman’, ‘The Distressed Needlewoman’, and, especially dramatically, ‘Shirtmaking – Starvation – and Suicide’ featured in regional and national newspapers in 1844. Following revelations about their underemployment and low wages the Society for the Protection of the Distressed Needlewomen in London was established in early 1844. Its preliminary meeting declared the society’s object was ‘to find work for as many of the unemployed as possible, to ensure to them a fair remuneration for their labour’. Although ragged schools taught needle work to girls it was on the basis that they should be ‘rendered capable, not only of mending, but also of making, their own clothes’, rather than that they should be equipped to enter ‘the already glutted market of needlewomen’. ‘The Over-Wrought Needlewoman’, *Lloyds Weekly London Newspaper*, 31 March 1844, ‘The Distressed Needlewoman’, *The Times*, 17 April 1844, ‘Shirtmaking – Starvation – and Suicide’, *Penny Satirist*, 7 September 1844, p. 2, ‘Society for the Protection of the Distressed Needlewomen in London’, *Morning Post*, 16 January 1844, ‘Scholars’ Prizes’, *RSUM* (January 1854), p. 57.

<sup>226</sup> Champneys, “‘She Hath Done What She Could’”, p. 7.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>228</sup> Champneys, ‘The Power of the Resurrection’.

worker certainly evoked interest among middle-class supporters, as demonstrated in a report published in the *Morning Post*. When a Mr Gardiner, a ragged school teacher, mentioned during a public meeting that a street-cleaner named Williams was his ‘*co-laborateur*’ the audience audibly asserted their disbelief. The report detailed that following Gardiner’s claim the atmosphere among those assembled ‘was electrical’ and it was deemed necessary ‘to satisfy the incredulity’ of the audience by sending for the street-cleaner in question.<sup>229</sup> Despite the sentimentality of the poor ragged school teacher in literature and the curiosity with which they were regarded, it is nevertheless clear that such teachers existed and played a significant role in the movement.

In his history of the Sunday school movement Laqueur states that ‘the currents of institutionalized benevolence ran far deeper in society than has been supposed’.<sup>230</sup> A similar conclusion may be drawn about the ragged schools. For the most part the background of ragged school teachers remains ambiguous. Little can be gleaned from committee minutes about those present beyond titles such as ‘Lord’ or ‘Reverend’. Yet, when newspaper reports and magazine articles are scouted closely it is possible to detect something of, to adopt Clark’s terminology, the ‘silent testimony’ of working-class ragged school teachers.<sup>231</sup> When attending the opening of a new Nottingham ragged school, Shaftesbury told those present that teachers were ‘not expected to be up in classics’, but they did need to be ‘possessed of peculiar genius’ with regards to their faith in God and ability to engage with children. Expanding on this he told his audience that ‘It was not necessary that they should pass an ordeal of examination by

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<sup>229</sup> ‘Industry and Merit Rewarded’, *Morning Post*, 12 February 1849, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> Laqueur, p. 3.

<sup>231</sup> Clark, ‘The Ragged School Union’, p. 291.

any Board of Examiners; that was not the species of intellect they required; it was a knowledge of the Bible they ought to possess, and also an acquaintance with the human heart, and a thorough knowledge of those whom they had to teach'. He then expressed his belief that 'By thus engaging all classes of society in this work it would produce a wide and permanent effect upon the world at large', a remark that was cheered by those present. When stressing the diversity of teachers in the schools, Shaftesbury referenced 'a meeting he had attended a short time ago' where he was presented with a document 'signed by 1,700 persons, of 150 different callings, some of the very humblest descriptions'.<sup>232</sup>

The document Shaftesbury referenced here was fortuitously published in the pages of the *RSUM*. It provides a detailed cross-section of 1,704 rich and poor, male and female, ragged school workers in the metropolis.<sup>233</sup> The document originates from a meeting held on 28 June 1859 in celebration of Shaftesbury's fifteenth year as president of the LRSU. The *RSUM* told readers that 'for some months past a movement has been on foot among the Ragged School teachers of London for making a presentation to the chairman of the Union, as a small token of their affection and gratitude'. Despite the 'most unfavourable' weather, as 'rain descended in torrents', the stairs to the meeting hall were 'lined with visitors long before the doors were opened' and the room 'filled with an enthusiastic audience' of over 1,600. Joseph Payne, a core member of the LRSU, commenced the meeting by greeting those present as 'Friends and fellow-labourers', before proclaiming 'Here are all of one kind; for we are a company of Ragged School Teachers'.<sup>234</sup> When Alexander Anderson spoke he stated

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<sup>232</sup> 'The Earl of Shaftesbury on Ragged Schools', *The Times*, 22 October 1859, p. 8.

<sup>233</sup> The text states that 1,700 names are provided in the ensuing list; however, the exact number is 1,704.

<sup>234</sup> 'Presentation to the Earl of Shaftesbury', *RSUM* (August 1859), p. 162.

that those gathered represented ‘various ranks of society’ who were nevertheless ‘animated by the same sentiments of profound respect and grateful affection towards the honoured President of our union’.<sup>235</sup> He went on to state that they varied from ‘the worthy judge who presides at this meeting’, a nod to Payne, ‘to the toiling dock-labourer, and the poor seamstress who earns her scanty pittance often by the midnight lamp’.<sup>236</sup>

When referencing the names presented to Shaftesbury, Anderson informed him that ‘As the professions and occupations are in most cases stated’ it is evident that ‘the sinews of our Ragged School movement lie chiefly amongst toiling, hard-working Christian men and women’. Expanding on the diversity found, Anderson proclaimed:

Your lordship will find barristers, clergymen, bankers, solicitors, merchants, and others of like stations in society; but a much larger proportion of consists of clerks and agents; grocers and gardeners; chemists and carvers; blacksmiths and whitesmiths; cooks and cowkeepers; bakers and butchers; brushmakers and brickmakers; plasterers and polishers; weavers and waistcoat-makers; hatters and hosiers; florists and flower-makers; coopers, coach-makers, rope-makers, gas-fitters, labourers, hairdressers and whitewashers.<sup>237</sup>

The list reflects the diversity Anderson described. Alongside ‘John Pulling, minister of High Street chapel’ and ‘John Valentine Burnell, optician’ was ‘Harry Dawe, warehouseman’ and ‘Chas. Blount, plasterer’. As Anderson states, although ‘barristers, clergymen, bankers, solicitors, merchants’ were well represented among the names, they were outnumbered by the vast number of menial workers listed.

The advantages working-class teachers possessed in the schools as well as the value of their expertise and experiences were frequently noted. Montague observed that the ‘tragedy

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

of a slum-child's life' would likely 'press heaviest' on those that 'were brought constantly in situations where they witnessed it'. In his pamphlet on Adams referenced above Champneys described how Adams was brought up 'in absolute want' following the death of his father.<sup>238</sup> According to Champneys, this heritage of poverty enabled Adams to empathise with the children who filled ragged school classrooms; he "knew the heart" of impoverished children 'for he had been one himself'.<sup>239</sup> Those who had experienced want and worked hard for their livelihoods were deemed especially beneficial in bridging the yawning chasm between poor children and more privileged teachers. As well as this, such teachers often brought industrial skills to the schools that could be passed on to scholars. Shoemaking, carpentry, and dressmaking were all trades related within ragged schools that boasted teachers with the necessary skills.

It should be noted that the relationship between ragged schools and working-class teachers was a symbiotic one. Just as the schools benefitted from the skills and experiences of shoemakers, carpenters, and milliners, the individuals in question likewise benefitted from the connections forged in the institutions as well as the acquired social and cultural capital. As Catherine Hall observes in the context of missionary societies, they 'were places of belonging, connection and identification'.<sup>240</sup> It is worth noting that Compton Place's Mr Weeks, who is discussed at length in chapter four, possessed shoemaking skills that he taught in the institution's industrial classes. After leaving the school in 1862 he returned to his trade; after Ware received a letter from Weeks in January 1865 he noted in his journals that Weeks

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<sup>238</sup> Champneys, 'The Power of the Resurrection', p. 12.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>240</sup> C. Hall, p. 293.

was ‘getting a pretty good living at shoemaking’.<sup>241</sup> It is telling that when signing his name and occupation upon the book presented to Shaftesbury in 1859, Weeks listed himself as ‘schoolmaster’, arguably concealing, or at least disregarding, his artisanal past.<sup>242</sup>

### **‘Her Name Graven at Full Length’: Wives and Women**

Recent studies of the social action of women in the nineteenth century highlight the significant contribution they made through philanthropic mediums like the Anglican sisterhoods and Ellen Ranyard’s Bible women.<sup>243</sup> According to Twells, ‘women were at the heart of the missionary philanthropic movement’.<sup>244</sup> Women were similarly important to the ragged schools, yet the extent of their involvement has not been fully realised. Clark’s reference to the ‘silent testimony of voluntary effort’ is most aptly applied to the many women who gave their time to the ragged school cause but have yet to be appropriately acknowledged. Pamphlets such as Champneys’s “‘She Hath Done What She Could’” are the exception to the general trend found across the movement’s discourse. In August 1859 the *RSUM*’s ‘Teachers’ Column’ rhetorically asked its readers with reference to the ragged school teacher: ‘who is he? whom does he serve? and what is his reward?’<sup>245</sup> Such habitual use of

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<sup>241</sup> SHC 1585/7, 15 January 1865.

<sup>242</sup> ‘Presentation to the Earl of Shaftesbury’, *RSUM* (August 1859), p. 174. The list is organised according to institutions; Weeks’s name is found alongside those of his Compton Place colleagues.

<sup>243</sup> Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1991), Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920*, ed. by Ellen Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>244</sup> Twells, p. 7.

<sup>245</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: The Ragged School Teacher’, *RSUM* (August 1859), p. 155.



masculine pronouns reinforces the prevailing notion of the male teacher and simultaneously masks the roles women played. Moreover, the leading figures of the institutions, whether chairmen, LRSU committee members, or superintendents of schools, present a masculine face to those observing the movement from the outside. As a result, women are hidden in the midst of tradition and social convention; however, a closer analysis of ragged school texts reveals they were not only present, but crucial to the movement. Despite the prominent masculine image of the ragged school teacher the significant contribution of women was recognised by the LRSU and likewise deserves recognition from historians.

The question of the contribution of women to the ragged school movement cannot be addressed without first referencing Carpenter, the Bristol-based social reformer and ragged school advocate. The committee minutes of the Bristol ragged school demonstrate the leading role she fulfilled in meetings, which were frequently hosted in her home. Furthermore, her voice was very much in the public arena as her lectures on education were published not only throughout Britain, but in Europe and the United States. For the most part, however, the women of the movement are found less forthrightly within ragged school texts; many are remembered because their names were recorded by men. For instance, Guthrie dedicated his *Seed Time and Harvest of Ragged Schools* to:

M. E. L., who has her name graven at full length on the grateful hearts of many children saved by means of that Original Ragged School, which has owed so much of its success to her generous, zealous, and untiring labours.<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, as Montague has highlighted, Mary Broom's contributions to Gravesend ragged school would have been lost had General Charles Gordon not spoken of her passion. In

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<sup>246</sup> Guthrie, *Seed Time and Harvest of Ragged Schools* (Edinburgh: Black, 1860).

Gordon's estimation, Broom, who died of disease contracted through visiting poor households, was "one of the best women in England".<sup>247</sup>

The critical contribution women had made and were making to schools and the wider movement was affirmed at various points. During a public meeting of the Sheffield ragged school in February 1849 the Rev. S. D. Waddy told those gathered that 'he believed it would be easier to find teachers for girls' schools than for boys', presumably because female volunteers were more forthcoming than male. Waddy then added the telling comment that 'The most successful teachers, in various places, had been females'.<sup>248</sup> The following year an article entitled 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools' that was published in the *Daily News* conveyed a similar message. After calling on a number of schools the journalist relayed his observation to the public, detailing 'that the most valuable teachers in ragged schools are those of the female sex'. According to those he spoke with, the ability of women to engage with 'even the most abandoned boys is something extraordinary'.<sup>249</sup>

In September 1859, the *RSUM* hailed the historical significance of the movement, prophesying 'whenever the history of the Ragged School movement is written, it will be seen that 24,000 children and 2,000 adults are weekly gathered into such institutions'. Of special significance here, the author then stressed that success had been possible 'because there were some men, and more women, whose hearts were in the right place'.<sup>250</sup> Forty-five years later Montague's history of the movement fulfilled the prophecy that the *RSUM* had made. According to Montague, 'feminine strength' had been of critical import to the schools. More

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<sup>247</sup> Montague, p. 126.

<sup>248</sup> 'Ragged Schools', *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 24 February 1849, p. 3.

<sup>249</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>250</sup> 'Old Clothes and Old Spectacles', *RSUM* (September 1859), p. 192.

than asserting their contribution to the movement, Montague argued that ‘The hopes of the ragged school cause are bound up with the service of woman’.<sup>251</sup> In Montague’s estimation the neglect of female education had driven ‘many of the most active women of capacity, education, and culture’ into the service of ragged schools.<sup>252</sup>

The list of ragged school teachers preserved in the *RSUM* mentioned above provides a glimpse not only of the number of women involved in the London schools, but also of their backgrounds. It is immediately plain that women made up a significant proportion of those listed. Of the 1,704 names 735, or 43 per cent, are identifiably female. It should be noted that the true number of women listed is likely to be considerably higher; the given figure excludes those names that conceal gender by using a first initial in place of a full name. The preserved names reveal the apparent common practice of family members volunteering together. The first page features ‘Lavinia Barber’ and ‘John Barber, City missionary’, ‘Hannah Coe Russell’, ‘Sarah Russell’, and ‘James Russell, pawnbroker’, as well as ‘John Leyland, engineer’, ‘Sarah Leyland’, and ‘Mary Ann Leyland’.<sup>253</sup> The Haseldens were especially prominent ragged school volunteers; ten family members, including six women, gave their time and energy towards one institution.<sup>254</sup>

Sources from local schools likewise demonstrate that married couples often worked in partnership. The committee minutes of Bristol ragged school in November 1858 record that both Mr and Mrs Higginbotham were employed as the institution’s master and

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<sup>251</sup> Montague, p. 112.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. p. 113.

<sup>253</sup> ‘Presentation to the Earl of Shaftesbury’, *RSUM* (August 1859), p. 168.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., p. 171. The Haseldens were not the only family to supply multiple teachers. In 1868 the *RSUM* noted that ‘one family supplies six teachers’ to the Kentish town ragged school. ‘The School Agent’s Work in North London’, *RSUM* (August 1868), p. 182.

mistress.<sup>255</sup> Ware's journals record a myriad of married couples that worked together in the school, including the Owens, Weeks, and Wards. Following Mrs Ward's death in February 1858, closely followed by the death of her husband, the *RSUM*'s 'Teachers' Column' featured an article entitled 'Our Deceased Fellow-Labourers: Pescod, Ward, and Parsons'. Readers were informed that 'Mr. and Mrs. Ward, of Britannia Court, King's Cross, Refuge, were removed in a good old age'. A brief overview of their work and its significance was given:

We only knew them in the eventide of life, and as the founders, and the subsequent master and mistress of the institution [...] They began their philanthropic labours under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. In a rough shed, with a dwelling attached, anything but commodious, they gathered some half-dozen destitute boys, whom they employed at wood-chopping; fed, clothed, and lodged them, and acted the part of parents to such as were orphans or deserted.

The publication goes on to note that Mrs Ward resiliently carried on working at the school until entirely incapacitated by illness.<sup>256</sup> It is clear from Ware's journals that the Wards proved invaluable; Mrs Ward in particular is referenced with especial frequency. It may be speculated that couples like the Wards, who appear to have had no offspring of their own, channelled their maternal and paternal energies into their work with poor children.

Certainly not all women who contributed to the work did so alongside a husband. Carpenter herself did not marry and was consistently referred to as 'Miss Carpenter' within the Bristol school's committee minutes.<sup>257</sup> Nevertheless, she became a lone parent at the age

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<sup>255</sup> Bristol Record Office (BRO) 21131/SC/StJAInd/M/I, Bristol Ragged School Committee Minute Book, 1858-1862. 4 November 1858.

<sup>256</sup> 'The Teachers' Column: Our Deceased Fellow-Labourers', *RSUM* (August 1858), p. 158. The *RSUM* article incorrectly dates Mrs Ward's death to 'May last'; Ware charted Mrs Ward's declining health throughout January and February before making note of her death on the same day that she died, 18 February. SHC 1585/5, 18 February 1858.

<sup>257</sup> BRO 21131/SC/StJAInd/M/I.

of 51 after adopting five-year-old Rosanna.<sup>258</sup> The list published in the *RSUM* likewise includes a significant proportion of women who were seemingly unaccompanied by either father or husband. As Twells writes in the context of women's roles in philanthropy, while many 'were related as wives, sisters and daughters, to missionary men, we should not assume that their commitment was derivative; women were independent actors within the missionary public'.<sup>259</sup> Although the solitary listing of 'The Misses Southall' unfortunately disguises the number of women from the Southall family involved, it highlights the fact that the schools provided a public avenue for women. Pairs of women with the same family name are a common feature of the list, such as Rebecca and Louisa Royston or Sarah and Mary Howard. However such women were related, whether mother and daughter, sisters, or cousins, there is a distinct trend of female relatives volunteering in the institutions together. Alongside this, however, lone female names are similarly prominent. 'Martha Beaumont', 'Miss Chamberlayne', as well as 'Elizabeth Green, grocer' and 'Miss Watson, dressmaker' are all listed in the same column on the final page of the article.<sup>260</sup> Further, the column that featured 'Lady Charlotte Gordon' also included 'Sarah Royfee, seamstress', 'Mary Ann Trimmings, dressmaker', and 'Catherine Thwaites, milliner'.<sup>261</sup> Housekeepers, confectioners, boxmakers, picklefillers, envelope folders, laundresses, and manglers are all found listed as the women's primary occupations. Such entries highlight the variety of women involved; just as diverse backgrounds are evident among the male names, women were similarly drawn from different sectors of society.

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<sup>258</sup> Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), p. 160.

<sup>259</sup> Twells, p. 7.

<sup>260</sup> 'Presentation to the Earl of Shaftesbury', *RSUM* (August 1869), p. 175.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.

## Conclusion

Over the twenty-six years covered by this thesis the ragged school movement had a considerable impact on British society. In May 1870 the LRSU claimed that upwards of 300,000 children had passed through the schools in the metropolis, while Guthrie asserted in 1867 that the Edinburgh ragged school on Ramsay Lane alone had successfully acquired employment for 500 of its scholars.<sup>262</sup> In providing an overview of the social and economic contexts that surrounded the ragged school movement in the early nineteenth century and stressing the significance of transformations in ideas regarding societal duty, children, and childhood, this chapter has explored the setting that shaped the schools. The increasingly sentimentalised representation of children as well as the triumphant depiction of overseas missions to save uncivilised populations clashed with the suffering of poor children in British cities. At the same time, environmentalist notions regarding the development of children fostered concerns about the influence of home and street and made intervention necessary.

Ragged schools were distinctive and innovative, responding to the perceived problems that child poverty posed to urban societies. Yet, in analysing the movement's own depiction of its history it is evident that the schools intertwined themselves within already established educational narratives and systems. In doing so the ragged school movement was simultaneously strengthened and historicised, while effectively forging a place for itself upon the nation's educational scene. Ragged schools both adopted and adapted ideas from existing institutions, forging their template in a magpie-like manner. Unlike already existing schools,

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<sup>262</sup> 'Proceedings at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1870), p. 130, Guthrie, *Out of Harness* (New York: Strahan & Co., 1867) p. 19.

ragged schools actively promoted teachers from a broad spectrum of Protestant denominations. This ecumenical policy proved highly beneficial as it optimised both volunteers and public support and safeguarded against the internal divisions that plagued other schools.

Clark's argument that 'There was not one ragged school movement, however, but several' has been disputed by drawing attention to the extensive links between schools facilitated by print culture and migration.<sup>263</sup> The ragged school movement was a broad one with considerable claim to national cohesion; to regard it as London-centric simplifies a complex picture. Although the LRSU played a prominent role in disseminating ideas through its publications, leaders such as Carpenter, Guthrie, and Watson played a likewise important role in shaping the movement's philosophy and obtaining public support. The *RSUM*, although published in London, promoted nationwide communication between ragged schools and fostered a sense of a common mission. The migration of teachers and supporters was also a vital factor, as schools were established and sustained through an evangelical network of passionate individuals. To dismiss the significance or validity of the schools outside of London overlooks the movement's value and breadth.

Ragged school teachers hailed from across the social spectrum. As Laqueur has found in the context of Sunday schools, working-class volunteers formed a significant proportion of ragged school teachers. In contrast with the scholarship of Platt and Mahood, this chapter has argued that the ragged school movement was not inherently middle-class. Rather, working-class individuals were a valued component of the movement. It was felt that teachers

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<sup>263</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 9.

from poorer backgrounds naturally empathised with scholars, while the trades they could teach augmented the education institutions offered. The relationship between schools and working-class teachers was a complementary one; schools benefitted from labouring skills and teachers profited from the social and cultural capital that involvement conferred. Women likewise made a crucial contribution to the movement; this chapter has uncovered the vast number of women from a wide variety of backgrounds that taught within ragged schools. The schools offered women a respectable space outside of the home where they could volunteer their time and become part of a diverse community. Without women it is highly unlikely that the movement could have possessed the momentum it did.





## Chapter 2

### **‘The Real Specimen of the Street Arab’: Constructing the Ragged Child**

#### **Introduction**

In April 1870 the beadle of Field Lane ragged school recorded an encounter with seven-year-old Thomas Loughlin of Drury Lane. Loughlin was begging at 11.30pm ‘shoeless, hatless, and in rags’, was ‘begrimed with dirt’, had sores upon his feet, and was ‘motherless’. The boy was, the beadle noted, ‘a real specimen of the street arab’.<sup>1</sup> The beadle’s account of Loughlin encapsulates the image of the street-child found across ragged school promotional literature. In April 1850, twenty years before the beadle’s entry, the *RSUM* published a poem that described the street-child:

His clothes all in tatters, his features all wild,  
His hair was bematted, his feet were unshod,  
As cold and as wet as the pavement he trod [...]  
No father, no mother, no home had the boy.<sup>2</sup>

In another article, the child in question was ‘a lump of unwashed and unkempt shivering juvenility and tattered raggedness’, with ‘the gait of a confirmed and incurable cripple’.<sup>3</sup> The children were ‘Unloved, uncared for, and familiar with hunger, nakedness, blows, and pavement-beds’.<sup>4</sup> Common themes are identifiable that together build a picture of the ‘real specimen’ of the street-child. They were dirty, rag-clad, deprived, and unhealthy. Such descriptions presented a simplified, succinct, and recognisable image or stereotype of the

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<sup>1</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002, Field Lane Beadle’s Journal, 5 April 1870.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Poetry: The Ragged School Boy’, *RSUM* (April 1850), p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> ‘The Pavement Chalker’, *RSUM*, (January 1854), p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Ragged Schools of London’, *British Mother’s Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p. 48.

street-child. Ragged, filthy, injured, and neglected, young Loughlin was the prime example of those the movement sought to save. Such descriptions are not only representative of ragged school discourse, but of a wider discursive event in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. As embodied in Dickens's Artful Dodger, street-children were fixtures of the urban scene, certainly in the middle-class mind, encapsulating concerns about delinquency and the impact of an increasingly industrial landscape upon the family and society.

This chapter centres on the street-child. It goes beyond the image of the 'real specimen of the street arab' found in promotional literature to explore the multiple functions of this construction. It argues that the focus on readily identifiable features, such as rags, dirt, and bare skin, stressed the children's difference from the norm and designated them outsiders to society. Alongside this, however, the recognisable features cited above acted, in Stanley Cohen's words, as a "badge of delinquency" that both identified street-children and signified their position as the 'other'.<sup>5</sup> In the context of the ragged school movement, the street-child stereotype was critical in communicating their purpose. The contrast between the ragged and the clothed, the dirty and the clean, allowed the movement's mission to be vividly and memorably pictured. As such, the final but nonetheless significant purpose of such descriptions was to provide language that powerfully depicted transformation.

In concentrating on the experiences behind the image in promotional literature, this chapter explores the physical condition of the urban poor. More than this, it focuses on the impact poverty had upon children in particular. By focusing on the children's experiences, it demonstrates the problematic nature of homogenising accounts of poor children. It argues

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Oxford: Robertson, 1980), p. 41.

that the notion of a ‘real specimen’ of street-child removes individuality from accounts, consequently limiting the information that can be attained about the child in question. Although children like Loughlin undoubtedly existed, the stress on particular identifying features produced narratives that communicated little else. Loughlin may have been underfed, unclean, unhealthy, and parentless; however, more personable information is absent and we are left to guess his character and his interpretation of his encounter with the Field Lane beadle that evening. In response to the dominance of adult voices, wherever possible the children’s own perception of their circumstances is highlighted. In focusing on the children’s testimonies their status as agents, rather than passive victims of circumstance, is demonstrated. Moreover, by analysing juvenile testimonies the potential physical and emotional trauma that want could cause is indicated. Finally, in exploring the interaction between street-children and ragged school teachers the crucial support such individuals and institutions could provide is highlighted.

Popular literature on child poverty in the nineteenth century does not critique the image of the street-child conveyed in promotional material.<sup>6</sup> Scholars such as Mahood, Platt, and Shore have responded to such narratives by stressing the constructed nature of ‘deviance’ in relation to juvenile delinquency.<sup>7</sup> They concur that poor or, in Shore’s context, criminal children were marked as deviant because of their failure to adhere to middle-class notions of family and childhood. The othering language employed in accounts of poor children is commented on extensively by Cunningham. For Cunningham such language is symptomatic

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<sup>6</sup> Helen Amy, *The Street Children of Dickens’ London* (Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2012), Jeannie Duckworth, *Fagin’s Children: Criminal Children in Victorian England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), Claire Seymour, *Ragged Schools, Ragged Children* (London: Ragged School Museum Trust, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Mahood, pp. 19-25, Platt, *The Child-Savers*, Shore, pp. 1-16.

of the abyss that separated the increasingly popular middle-class ideal of childhood from the conditions impoverished children experienced.<sup>8</sup> In concurrence with Cunningham, Shore writes that mid-nineteenth century social commentators utilised ‘verbose and hyperbolic’ language when describing poor children, which, although ‘not necessarily untrue’, failed to convey the complexities encountered in practice.<sup>9</sup>

Jennifer Davis’s microhistory of Jennings’ Buildings underscores how popular narratives conceal diversity. She argues that although the inhabitants were predominantly Irish Catholic, they were nevertheless ‘divided by economic interest, by social attitudes, and by their behaviour’. The use of the term ‘casual poor’, according to Davis, conceals the multifaceted community that resided in the Buildings.<sup>10</sup> With regards to poor children, Koven’s research on Thomas Barnardo’s depiction of children is especially helpful. Koven observes that Barnardo orchestrated photographs that ‘intentionally underscored the raggedness’ of those pictured while purposefully exposing their ‘bodies and extremities’.<sup>11</sup> For Koven, like Shore above, the resulting images conveyed information that was ‘not strictly speaking accurate’. The portrayal of ragged children in this manner was, in Koven’s estimation, simultaneously ‘an effective visual marker of poverty’ and ‘a disturbingly erotic sign’.<sup>12</sup> More generally, the research of James Kincaid and Carol Mavor is likewise relevant as they explore how children can be simplified and confined within a framework of passivity

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<sup>8</sup> Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor*, p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> Shore, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer Davis, ‘Jennings Buildings and the Royal Borough: The Construction of the Underclass in Mid-Victorian England’, in *Metropolis, London: Histories and Representations Since 1800*, ed. by David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge, 1989) pp. 11-39 (pp. 19-21).

<sup>11</sup> Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) p. 118.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113, p. 118.

and innocence.<sup>13</sup> In the context of narratives of child sexual abuse, Kincaid argues that complexities are nullified through narratives that cast the child as passive and innocent in contrast with the villainous perpetrator.<sup>14</sup> Kincaid argues that, even in the case of a ‘smart and active older adolescent’, accounts may recast them as ‘a child, a generic “essence-of-child”’. In such narratives ‘actual age, activities, particularities are melted away’, allowing a persona to be created at the discretion of the reporter.<sup>15</sup> Common to Kincaid, Koven, and Mavor’s scholarship is the idea that a child’s characteristics may be imposed upon them by their depicter, who controls the information conveyed as well as that hidden. This chapter builds on the above, arguing that ragged school literature highlighted common features of poor children that came to act as markers that were simultaneously indicative of a child’s character. Moreover, this chapter contributes to existing scholarship by positing that street-children were not necessarily at the mercy of their middle-class audience. It argues that, in contrast to the image of the passive child, street-children were alert to sympathy and utilised the means at their disposal to obtain assistance when necessary.

In response to the homogenised image of poor children found across child-saving literature, the lived experiences of poor children have received considerable attention from historians in recent years. As cited earlier, Burnett, Davin, and Humphries have interrogated inherited ideas about the condition of children in poor and working-class families. In drawing on sources that give access to children’s experiences, they demonstrate the complex picture

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<sup>13</sup> James Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), Carol Mavor, *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

encountered when the homes, schools, and workplaces of individual children are investigated.<sup>16</sup> Inspired by this, the following chapter focuses on the children's experiences of poverty. It reevaluates Burnett's conclusions that poor children 'accepted unquestioningly' many features of poverty as they 'had never experienced anything else'.<sup>17</sup> In contrast with Burnett it argues that poor children were not acclimatised to poverty; rather, they communicated their distress, shame, even anger, through words and tears. It demonstrates the extensive, and in some cases debilitating, physical and emotional impact of poverty. As well as this, it contributes to scholarly debate by uncovering children's testimonies. Unlike the recollected words that form the basis of oral testimonies or autobiographies, this chapter draws on the immediate words of impoverished children as recorded by their teacher. Further, by using letters from former ragged school children a rare insight into the potential long-term impact of deprived childhoods is made possible.

To enable the street-child template found in ragged school literature to be deconstructed and the experiences of poor children to be accessed a wide variety of sources are drawn on. Ragged school promotional material from across England and Scotland is used alongside the reports of school meetings published in national and regional newspapers. Material from schools, including annual reports and committee minutes, is used to highlight the condition of children in attendance. The Field Lane casebook of emigrants has proven especially helpful in exploring the children's experiences, as it both outlines the history of each scholar and includes photographs of those described. Ware's journals are of particular value as in describing the appearance, actions, and words of scholars, he gives unprecedented

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<sup>16</sup> Burnett, *Destiny Obscure*, Davin, Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*.

<sup>17</sup> Burnett, *Destiny Obscure*, p. 58.

access to the daily challenges poor children faced. Furthermore, the letters Ware later received from scholars broaden the scope of this study, giving access to their authors' recollections of London and the poverty endured there as well as providing evidence of the long-term effects of childhood deprivation.

### **'Scarcely Clothed': Rags, Skin, and Dirt**

Rags, skin, and dirt were features that defined generations of poor children. Cohen theorises that individuals are categorised as outsiders by identifying styles or features that associate them with a socially deviant group.<sup>18</sup> Rags, skin, and dirt were three of the most recognisable and commonly cited markers of the street-child (Appendix A: Figure 6). According to the *RSUM* the schools were formed for a particular group of children, 'The dirtier the skin, and the more tattered the clothing, the more complete the qualifications entitling these little urchins to a place within the Ragged School'.<sup>19</sup> The schools were intended for the 'uncared for class of children of the poor, whose begrimed skin, uncombed hair, often shoeless feet and tattered garments render them ineligible for admission into a higher class of schools'.<sup>20</sup> The '*distinctive character*' of the schools would purportedly be lost if adequately clothed, clean children were permitted entry.<sup>21</sup>

The title given to the movement encompasses the way in which rags defined children

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<sup>18</sup> Cohen, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> 'Ragged, but Not in Rags', *RSUM* (January 1858), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> 'The Ragged School Tree', *RSUM* (August 1856), p. 145.



in need.<sup>22</sup> In 1846 Lord Shaftesbury told those present at the LRSU's second annual meeting that he would 'on no account change the name', arguing it 'pointed out best the destitution that called for assistance'.<sup>23</sup> Three years later he again asserted the importance of the word 'ragged', stating that it 'marked the line of their duty and the sphere of their operations'.<sup>24</sup> During the same meeting 'Charles Hindley Esq' stressed the importance of the term in obtaining public sympathy, stating that no other title would 'have awakened the sympathy which they saw manifested'.<sup>25</sup> Shaftesbury again defended the title in 1857, explaining that it accurately stressed the transformation that took place within the schools.<sup>26</sup> In 1859, fifteen years after the LRSU was formed, he warned that 'the moment they ignored that word the interest of the institution would be gone'.<sup>27</sup> Controversies over the term were not confined to LRSU meetings but also occurred at local level. The Field Lane committee minutes for July 1848 reveal a letter was received from a teacher stating she would 'be compelled to leave' if 'ragged' was added to the school sign. The committee notes detail that 'Much conversation then ensued', during which a letter from Shaftesbury was read indicating his 'opinion was most clearly in favour' of including the word. It was eventually concluded, after 'a very lengthy discussion', that the sign should be changed to incorporate the controversial term.<sup>28</sup> Those

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<sup>22</sup> Deborah Wynne comments on the significance of rags for the ragged school mission, stating 'The link between rags and redemption was implicit in the popular name for the free schools for destitute children, 'Ragged Schools', where street children were taught to read texts conveying Christian messages of redemption. By calling these schools 'ragged', the torn clothing of the pupils was emphasized as much as the institution's educational purpose'. Deborah Wynne, 'Reading Victorian Rags: Recycling, Redemption, and Dickens's Ragged Children', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 20:1 (2015), 34-49 (p. 34).

<sup>23</sup> 'Ragged Schools Union Society', *Daily News*, 10 June 1846.

<sup>24</sup> 'Ragged School Union', *The Times* 16 May 1849, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> 'Proceedings at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1849), p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> 'Ragged School Union – City of London', *The Times*, 20 February 1857, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> 'The Earl of Shaftesbury on Ragged Schools', *The Times*, 22 October 1859, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/003, 15 July 1848. Bloomer states that the Manchester school also encountered a disagreement over the institution's name. Following the concern over the term 'ragged', the school was entitled the 'Manchester Juvenile Refuge'. Bloomer, p. 112.

who objected to the word did so on the grounds that it stigmatised those in their care, effectively keeping the children ragged. Despite the concerns raised the term was resolutely retained by the LRSU, which, under Shaftesbury's direction, used it to define their mission.

As feared by those who criticised the use of 'ragged' in the LRSU's title, it is likely that many poor children were burdened by their ragged identity. In contrast with Burnett's observation that 'ragged clothing' was 'often accepted unquestioningly' by poor children who had known nothing else, Ellen Ross notes the sense of pride attached to good clothing in her study of working-class motherhoods.<sup>29</sup> Although it is rare to gain an insight into the children's feelings on this subject, small hints are perceptible. The *OCM* covered topics regarded as relevant for the children, and thus often featured moralistic stories that decried fighting, lying, stealing, and swearing. Such stories were intended to advise young readers on the correct behaviour or to equip them for difficult situations that may arise with their peers. It is therefore telling that in 1860 the *OCM* featured a story entitled 'Old Patch', which told of a 'poor boy who came to school with a large patch on his knee'. Another scholar, a "great tease", nicknamed him "Patch" because of the condition of his trousers. The boy responded to the teasing by asking "you don't suppose I'm ashamed of my patch, do you?", after which he instead asserted his thankfulness for the patch as it symbolised his mother's tireless efforts to keep him out of ragged clothing.<sup>30</sup> The inclusion of this story in the *OCM* indicates that its editors were mindful of the fact that children may be mocked on account of their tattered clothing, even in a school dedicated to ragged children.

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<sup>29</sup> Burnett, *Destiny Obscure*, p.58, Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 83.

<sup>30</sup> 'Old Patch', *OCM* (January 1860), p. 12.

Although there are no clear cases of bullying on the basis of rags in Ware's journals, it is nevertheless evident that scholars were alert to the significance attached to ragged clothing. When Ware visited a boy named Fitzgerald on 10 July 1853 to suggest he attend the ragged school, he afterwards noted 'the boy seemed too respectable & did not like to come'.<sup>31</sup> The following year Ware observed that the same boy 'did not seem to like' living with a 'Miss Christian' as she was 'dirty in her habits'.<sup>32</sup> It may be speculated through Ware's tentative conclusions that rags and dirt carried connotations young Fitzgerald wished to avoid. Despite the fact that Ware and the school could potentially assist him, Fitzgerald 'did not like to come' because of possible implications upon his respectability. Ten years later Ware's journal contains a particularly moving entry that reveals the distress rags could cause. On 16 August 1863 Ware wrote that young John Millington was 'very much out of spirits, desponding & ragged'. He observed that he had 'never saw a boy so cast down', adding 'his stammering seems to increase'. According to Ware, Millington 'had been ashamed to ~~speak~~ come to school because he was so shabby'.<sup>33</sup> As Ware's correction infers, Millington was doubly ashamed; both his stammer and his appearance marked him as an outsider even within a ragged school. In May 1860 Robert Restieaux, a Compton Place emigrant in New Zealand, sent his first letter to Ware. In it he enthused of Christchurch that 'there is no destitute People & mean so Poor as there is in London', adding that he had 'not seen one Raged individuel here yet'.<sup>34</sup> It is notable that Robert identified the absence of rags as an indicator of Christchurch's affluence; it is possible that he simultaneously reflected on the disgrace and

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<sup>31</sup> SHC 1585/3, 10 July 1853.

<sup>32</sup> SHC 1585/3, 5 March 1854.

<sup>33</sup> SHC 1585/6, 16 August 1863.

<sup>34</sup> SHC 1487/156/1, 20 May 1860.

embarrassment associated with his own ragged childhood in St. Pancras.

The intensification of rags or their disappearance altogether indicated that a family had fallen on especially hard times. After encountering Eugene Brian in November 1857 ‘in a dreadfully ragged condition’ Ware admitted him to the school’s dormitory, while the following month he promised to help Carr obtain clothes after witnessing him begging in Russell Square ‘barefoot and half naked’ on 20 December 1857.<sup>35</sup> In the examples of Brian and Carr it was their rags, or in Carr’s case their near absence, which signified assistance was needed. Further, in May 1858 Ware wrote that Henry Wicks’s father had ‘pawned his new coat’ after ‘a bad week with his cab’, after which he added ‘The family are really very unfortunate’, a comment that demonstrates the sympathy he felt for the household’s troubles.<sup>36</sup> Like the Wicks family, many were at the mercy of fluctuations in employment and consequently furniture and clothing were pawned during periods of hardship.<sup>37</sup>

The regularity with which clothes were pawned is highlighted by both the *RSUM* and the *OCM*. In 1849 the *RSUM* related how teachers from a ragged school sought clothes for children by calling ‘door to door’, only to be told ‘by many’ that ‘it would be no use to provide the children with clothing, as their parents would be sure to pawn them’.<sup>38</sup> Three years later the *OCM* featured a piece entitled ‘December’, informing readers that ‘warm clothing is wanted’. It explained that the appeal was necessary because of the ‘bad conduct of their

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<sup>35</sup> SHC 1585/5, 24 November 1857, SHC 1585/5, 20 December 1857.

<sup>36</sup> SHC 1585/5, 16 May 1858.

<sup>37</sup> Wynne draws attention to the value of rags in the nineteenth century and demonstrates the wealth accrued in the rag and bone trade. According to Wynne, ‘rags were also a sought-after commodity, scavenged from the streets and collected directly from households for recycling into paper’. Wynne, ‘Reading Victorian Rags’, p. 34. In 1854 an article entitled ‘Want of Rags’, reprinted from the *Economist*, was featured in the *Daily News*. It referred to the ‘great national want’ for rags and, in referencing America, noted that ‘Bounties are offered there as here for a supply’ from which the need for paper could be satisfied. ‘Want of rags’, *Daily News*, 8 July 1854.

<sup>38</sup> ‘The Old Stable’, *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 48.

parents' who 'spend all they earn in summer months' and are left 'without work and money' in the winter, and consequently 'all that belong to them suffer'.<sup>39</sup> Ross argues that the pawning system was a common coping mechanism that enabled destitute families to endure harsh periods.<sup>40</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that clothing acted as collateral for those in need, such as young James Brown whose notes in the Field Lane casebook read he 'Had to sell his clothes' when out of work.<sup>41</sup> Further, Ross asserts that the pawnshop was commonly perceived as a woman's domain, with many mothers demonstrating skill and confidence when negotiating with pawnbrokers.<sup>42</sup>

Ware's journals reveal many instances of parents pawning their children's clothes, and, in concurrence with Ross's observations, most cases were mentioned in connection with mothers. For instance, in the spring of 1863 Ware noted that John Smith's mother 'had pawned many of his things, particularly a pair of trousers which he could not well do without'.<sup>43</sup> Mrs Smith was evidently a regular visitor to her local pawn shop. Two years before pawning her son's trousers, Mrs Smith 'beat her daughter Margaret so much that she ran away'.<sup>44</sup> Ware wrote in his journal that the conflict between mother and daughter 'arose out of [Margaret's] refusal to pawn her frock' at her mother's demand.<sup>45</sup> Gordon's research is helpful in understanding both the practical and emotional significance that money could play in relations between mothers and children. Gordon stresses the critical role a child could play in contributing financially to their household, particularly in cases of lone mothers. She argues

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<sup>39</sup> 'December', *OCM* (December 1852), p. 183.

<sup>40</sup> Ross, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, James Brown.

<sup>42</sup> Ross, pp. 81-84.

<sup>43</sup> SHC 1585/6, 22 March 1863.

<sup>44</sup> SHC 1585/6, 12 May 1861.

<sup>45</sup> SHC 1585/6, 12 May 1861.

that control over a child's labour, or, in this case, their financial assets in the form of clothing, was deeply embedded in the poor's psyche as a form of parental authority. Resentment and abuse, according to Gordon, could result when mothers felt deprived 'of the evidence of love and respect' that financial contributions from children signified.<sup>46</sup> Margaret's refusal to pawn her dress likely signified ungratefulness to her mother.

Given both the raggedness of poor children as well as the common practice of pawning clothing, bare skin was a regular sight. The committee of Helensburgh school complained that 'the severity of the weather' and 'the want of shoes' had affected attendance, while Guthrie described how children were confined to cellars for weeks 'for want of rags to cover their nakedness'.<sup>47</sup> Some children, however, did venture outside with their skin exposed. In June 1846 *The Times* gave an account of the attire found in one school, where '17 had no shoes on their feet, 13 had neither hat, cap, nor bonnet, and 12 no body linen whatever'.<sup>48</sup> According to the *RSUM*, some clothing was so tattered that it merely 'served as an apology to cover their nakedness'.<sup>49</sup> Skin was often seen among children in the Field Lane locality, as the school's casebook testified in its note that sixteen-year-old Thomas James had 'No home. No clothing' at the time of his entry in April 1857.<sup>50</sup> The Field Lane beadle likewise graphically reported the 'deplorable state' of one thirteen-year-old who had 'only a few rags hanging about him, and not a particle of a shirt'.<sup>51</sup>

It is doubtless that naked skin was an evocative image that pricked the public's

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<sup>46</sup> Gordon, p. 127.

<sup>47</sup> GCA CO4/6/5/1/1, 29 February 1860, Guthrie, *Out of Harness*, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Ragged School Union', *The Times* 10 June 1846, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Old Stable', *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, Thomas James.

<sup>51</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002, 19 July 1870.

conscience. Unsurprisingly, the *RSUM* frequently drew on the Biblical precedence to clothe the naked during descriptions of the children's indecency. When advertising the movement's need for clothing donations in December 1866 readers were told:

The Apostle James pointedly says, "If a brother or sister be naked, and one of you say unto them, Be ye warmed, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit?" Will some kind reader, who has no more pressing call, take this apostolic hint?<sup>52</sup>

Yet, the focus placed on the children's bare skin may appear ominous to modern readers. Rags were mentioned on the basis of their failure to hide skin, thus directing the reader's attention towards the child's body beneath. For instance, in 1850 the *RSUM* described the children they sought to help as 'these poor creatures, whose delicate limbs are scarcely clothed with rags', while ten years later the general secretary of George-yard school wrote to the *Morning Post* that the scholars attending his school came 'almost naked' with what few clothes they were wearing 'ready to drop off them'.<sup>53</sup> In other cases the children's skin received particularly close attention. Maclagan's *Ragged School Rhymes* stated in reference to a young girl 'Through your scanty rags I see your trembling naked skin', while the *RSUM* detailed how one boy's rags did not 'cover the naked limbs' and left his 'bare skin "goose-fleshed" with the wintry blast'.<sup>54</sup>

Such language performed multiple functions. It stressed the subject's defencelessness and vulnerability, both to the elements and the gaze of others. At the same time, the children's

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<sup>52</sup> 'Old Clothes for Ragged Schools', *RSUM* (December 1866), p. 277.

<sup>53</sup> 'Ragged Schools – Les Ecoles en Haillons', *RSUM* (January 1850), p. 11, 'Two Hundred Thousand Men, Women, and Children', *Morning Post*, 10 January 1860, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Maclagan, p. 43, 'The Pavement Chalker', *RSUM* (January 1854), p. 192. It is noteworthy that the reference to "goose-fleshed" skin was published in the January edition of the magazine; it was during the depth of the winter that it was most necessary to draw attention to the children's condition.

nakedness was symptomatic of their status as outsiders to a clothed and civilised society. Moreover, exposed skin, particularly in the case of girls, hinted at the child's sexual knowledge and amoral conduct.<sup>55</sup> As mentioned earlier, Koven has categorised the exposed skin in Barnardo's images of poor children as 'a disturbingly erotic sign'.<sup>56</sup> The focus on the children's bodies in ragged school narratives is likewise morally ambiguous. Although such sensationalised and sensualised accounts were no doubt intended to conjure maternal or paternal feelings in readers by stirring instincts to provide for and protect, they nevertheless ran the risk of attracting those with less caring motivations.

Ragged school material did not create an interest in the street-child; rather, it reflected the curiosity and intrigue of society. Public fascination with poor children is suggested by a report published in the *Morning Post* in 1856 that noted how a shoeblack boy 'was so hedged in by on-lookers that patrons would have found it difficult to squeeze their way to him'.<sup>57</sup> Ware records a particularly telling exchange that gives insight into the children's awareness of their impact on passers-by. Seven days after meeting a scantily clad Carr in Russell Square and promising to obtain him clothes, Ware recorded that the boy 'declined my offer of clothes with thanks; as he found that he got more money begging while in rags'.<sup>58</sup> Ware's indignation at Carr's reponse is communicated in his underlining of the final three words, a practice he reserved for the most scandalous entries. Carr's decision to decline clothes from Ware left

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<sup>55</sup> Recent studies by Cale, Jackson, and Mahood and Littlewood demonstrate that poor girls were portrayed as prematurely sexually experienced. Michelle Cale, 'Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System', *History*, 78 (1993), 201-217, Jackson, *Child sexual abuse in Victorian England*, Mahood and Littlewood.

<sup>56</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, p. 118.

<sup>57</sup> 'Shoeblack Brigade in Ipswich', *Morning Post*, 9 April 1856, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> SHC 1585/5, 27 December 1857.



him, according to his teacher, 'half naked'.<sup>59</sup> This exchange suggests Carr's awareness of the profitability of his rags, illustrating the acumen that could lie behind the donning of ragged apparel. Unlike those who pawned their clothes, Carr was not obtaining money from his rags via the pawnshop but through orchestrating sympathy from the public. Carr's actions challenge Koven's conclusions, serving as a reminder that although impoverished children were portrayed as defenceless objects of interest, they were not always subjected to uninvited and unwanted attention. Rather, it was possible for them to exercise some control, if not over their circumstances, then over their audience.

It was not only a child's tattered clothing that marked them as 'beyond the pale', to borrow Carpenter's phrase.<sup>60</sup> Dirt was referenced on a regular basis, as the children were described as 'mud-begrimed', 'dirt-begrimed', 'unwashed', 'things of London gutter mud'.<sup>61</sup> According to accounts, they had 'begrimed cheeks', 'begrimed skin', 'skin coated with filth', and 'mud-covered face, hands, and feet'.<sup>62</sup> If civilisation was defined by order, dirt signified disorder and chaos. Exemplifying this, Field Lane school declared in 1846 that they imparted to scholars 'habits of cleanliness and order', associating dirt with disorder by default.<sup>63</sup> Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* is relevant here, as she argues that dirt is comparable with 'the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death'.<sup>64</sup> For

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<sup>59</sup> SHC 1585/5, 20 December 1857.

<sup>60</sup> Mary Carpenter, *The Claims of Ragged Schools to Pecuniary Educational Aid from the Annual Parliamentary Grant: As an Integral Part of the Educational Movement of the Country* (London: Partridge and Paternoster, 1859) p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Pike, p. 8, 'Newspaper Brigade', *RSUM* (December 1866), p. 265, G. Hall, p. 19, 'The Shoe-Black Brigade', *Punch*, 21 February 1857, p. 80.

<sup>62</sup> 'Out of the Gutter', *RSUM*, January 1869, p. 14, 'Ragged, but Not in Rags', *RSUM* (January 1858), p. 7, 'Public Nurseries', *RSUM* (January 1851), p. 243, 'The Old Stable, No. 1.', *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> 'Field Lane Ragged Schools', *Standard*, 16 December 1846.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 5.

Douglas, dirt is ‘matter out of place’, a ‘kind of omnibus compendium which includes all the rejected elements of ordered systems’.<sup>65</sup> Dirty children were, by extension, unrestrained and uncontrolled. Their proximity to dirt accentuated their otherness; they were antithetical to a clean, civilised society. Alongside accounts of dirt are references to unkempt hair, which, in the words of the *RSUM*, grew ‘like a scrubbing brush’.<sup>66</sup> In Aberdeen, Watson described his scholars’ hair as hanging in ‘matted locks’, while Guthrie referenced a boy whose face was hidden ‘beneath his shaggy bush of hair’.<sup>67</sup> Just as nakedness was a visual representation of vulnerability, dirtiness signified neglect on the part of parents. Likewise, unkemptness indicated that a child was uncared for, shifting blame from the child in question to the ‘merciless treatment’ of their parents.<sup>68</sup>

The environments children lived and worked in ensured that cleanliness was unlikely, if not impossible. Accounts of the children’s homes engaged the senses of readers through evocative, tangible, and often repulsive language. The localities ragged children inhabited were, according to the *RSUM*, plagued with ‘offensive smells’ to the extent that their houses could be ‘smelt before they are seen’.<sup>69</sup> Unsurprisingly the children themselves were not free from odour, with a ‘heavy and sickening’ smell purportedly emanating from their gatherings.<sup>70</sup> Although smell is not commented on in relation to the children or their homes in Ware’s journals, the Field Lane casebook provides an especially graphic description of one boy who

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 40, p. 35.

<sup>66</sup> ‘The Street Boy’, *RSUM* (May 1868), p. 101.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Industrial Schools for the Destitute, Aberdeen by Mr Sherriff Watson (cont.)’, *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 42, Guthrie *Plea for Ragged Schools*, p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> Watson, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Destroyed, Not in Anger, Nor in Battle’, *RSUM* (December 1870), p. 266.

<sup>70</sup> G. Hall, p. 20, ‘Scenes and Sights in London No. III’, *RSUM* (November 1849), p. 203.

was found 'barefooted and in Rags covered in xxxx'.<sup>71</sup>

It was, however, not only a bad odour that children carried from their homes. The *RSUM* labelled the poor's dwellings 'well stocked preserves for propagating all kinds of dirt and vermin', while potential visitors were warned that the 'walls were covered with vermin'.<sup>72</sup> When speaking to the House of Commons in 1848 Shaftesbury read a City Missionary's account of the conditions poor children resided in, which remarked that "The quantity of vermin is astonishing". After visiting one dwelling the missionary wrote how he 'felt them dropping on my hat from the ceiling', after which he quantified this statement, adding 'they may be gathered in handfuls'.<sup>73</sup> It is no surprise that the children's heads were frequently infested with the parasites that afflicted their homes. In 1861 the *RSUM* told how one young woman was almost 'eaten alive by what we will call insects of prey' after working with the children, while another teacher described the children's bodies as "full of holes and ulcers, from the effects of vermin!".<sup>74</sup> When a ragged school was established in Charing Cross in 1865 it was found to be 'absolutely necessary' to shave the children's heads because of the severity of lice infestations, while five years later the Field Lane beadle noted that ten-year-old William Allen was all 'alive with vermin'.<sup>75</sup> Infestations could be distressing for sufferers, causing great discomfort as well as embarrassment. On the 27 November 1864 Ware recorded

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<sup>71</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A. Ware's only reference to smell is in the context of William Ellis's father who, according to Ware, 'smelt of drink'. Steedman comments on the impact of smell in her research on Margaret McMillan. She writes that the children McMillan worked with 'often smelled very bad indeed'. McMillan herself noted her personal reaction to the children's condition, stating "You see how horrible Dirt is. It makes one *sick*. Every one ought to be clean". Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan, 1860-1931* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 200. SHC 1585/6, 30 January 1864.

<sup>72</sup> 'Seven Plagues of London and the Ragged Schools', *RSUM* (November 1861), p. 259, 'Life in the Lanes of London', *RSUM* (January 1851), p. 259.

<sup>73</sup> 'Ragged School Emigration', *Examiner*, 10 June 1848.

<sup>74</sup> 'Seven Plagues of London and the Ragged Schools', *RSUM*, (November 1861) p. 259, Pike, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Seymour, p. 11, LMA 4060/E/01/002, 28 July 1870.

that Charles Henley had attended the Sunday evening school in a ‘dirty & wretched’ condition.<sup>76</sup> Just over a month later, on New Year’s Day 1865, Ware wrote that the boy was reluctant to return home after having ‘the itch’.<sup>77</sup> For young Charles Henley, the frequently whitewashed school may well have represented a sanctuary from infestations.

### **‘Almost Starving Stomach’: Hungry Bodies**

The children were similarly defined by their want, with their empty stomachs and deprived bodies being commonly remarked upon. The way that the poorest children mediated between famines and feasts was described by the *Manchester Times and Gazette* in 1846 which stated that their diets were ‘subject to alternate fits of repletion and starvation’, while Watson told how the average street-child was acclimatised to a fluctuating diet and therefore ‘eats voraciously when he gets food, and can endure long fasting when he cannot get it’.<sup>78</sup> The fierce appetite that resulted from periods of want is likely the reason that Ware and his fellow teachers ‘expected a disturbance about Cross buns’ on Good Friday in 1856 and believed it was ‘prudent to have no school’.<sup>79</sup> Sensitive stomachs commonly resulted from such unreliable diets; in 1868 the *RSUM* described how the children in one school ‘had come to school and lain exhausted’, while others ‘vomited clear water from a hungry-wrung, empty stomach’.<sup>80</sup> This description is reminiscent of an incident Ware recorded in March 1854, when James

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<sup>76</sup> SHC 1585/7, 27 November 1864.

<sup>77</sup> SHC 1585/7, 1 January 1865.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 4 September 1846, Watson, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> SHC 1585/4, 21 March 1856. The following year Ware indicated the greed of one boy when he noted that Reeves ‘intends to start in the cake line’, adding afterwards ‘If he does he will eat all his stock of himself’, SHC 1585/5, 5 April 1857.

<sup>80</sup> ‘The Children’s Dinner Party’, *RSUM* (December 1868), p. 272.

Ward became ill after eating pork given to him by a teacher. Ware noted in his journal that Ward's 'almost starving stomach' had been unable to process it.<sup>81</sup>

Some insight into the children's diets can be gleaned from the 1855 annual meeting of the Nottingham ragged schools. Reporting on the meeting, the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* detailed how one child came to school 'eating a raw potato, another knawing on a raw herring, a third was eating some cabbage stalks picked up from the refuse in the market, and a fourth was seen to take and eat something from the gutter'.<sup>82</sup> Ware regularly noted that the children's diets were insufficient, as, for instance, when he visited William Crawley's father in February 1851 and 'taxed him' on the basis that he sent his son out to find his own food.<sup>83</sup> The absence of meat from a diet was a particular cause for concern among the middle class who recognised it as essential for good health.<sup>84</sup> Attention was drawn to the poor's lack of meat in an article entitled 'Meat for the Poor' published in the *RSUM* in 1866, which detailed how the deprived 'never now see meat, except on the butcher's stall, or when it smokes on the counter of the cook's shop'.<sup>85</sup> Ware's journals demonstrate that he was keenly aware of the children's lack of meat. More than this, Ware's entries show that he sought to improve the children's diets

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<sup>81</sup> SHC 1585/3, 20 March 1854.

<sup>82</sup> 'Nottingham Ragged Schools', *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 22 February 1855, p. 5. The connection between diet and health was well established by this period, as demonstrated in a speech that the literary giant Victor Hugo gave before forty poor children gathered in his home for a meal on Boxing Day, 1867. According to the account of proceedings related in the *RSUM*, Hugo told those present that 'Scientific men tell us that poor children require proper nourishment at least once a month, without which their health would be sure to suffer'. On this basis, Hugo provided a substantial number of local children with a Christmas meal. 'Christmas with Victor Hugo', *RSUM* (February 1868), p. 38.

<sup>83</sup> SHC 1585/1, 28 February 1851.

<sup>84</sup> The research of both Burnett and Ross references the social value attached to meat in the diets of the poor, with Ross stating that it possessed 'special power' that denoted financial independence. Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Food in England* (London: Nelson, 1966), Ross, p.32. Champneys measured poverty according to the presence of meat, writing 'Animal food was almost entirely a stranger to her – she scarcely ever tasted meat'. Champneys, "She hath done what she could", p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> 'Meat for the Poor', *RSUM* (December 1866), p. 275.

through practical assistance. In 1858, upon hearing that one boy's father was too ill to work, Ware 'ordered him 2lbs of meat' in the hope 'that better living may do him good'.<sup>86</sup> Three years later, in 1861, Ware noted that young John Smith wanted 'some shelves to place their food upon' as 'cats come in at the broken window & steal all the meat'.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, after visiting William Spundley he recorded that the boy was 'weak & unhappy'. When he was informed that Spundley 'seldom had meat except on Sunday', Ware deemed action necessary.<sup>88</sup> During the same month the school's committee resolved to give meat out during the monthly mothers' meeting.<sup>89</sup>

Both promotional and local sources demonstrate that street-children were commonly underweight and small for their age. In contrast with the Victorian ideal of the rosy-cheeked and plump infant, the children suffered from 'stunted growth' and possessed a 'pinched appearance'.<sup>90</sup> According to newspaper reports, they were 'emaciated, care-worn and consumptive' with 'Sunken eyes lighting up sallow cheeks'.<sup>91</sup> Guthrie employed strikingly similar terms when he told how Edinburgh's ragged children possessed 'hollow cheeks, and sunken eyes, and sallow countenances'.<sup>92</sup> When describing the impoverished children to be witnessed in the city, Guthrie stated his intention to 'fill up these hollow cheeks' in the ragged school, transforming scholars into recognisable children with 'pretty roses blooming in his

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<sup>86</sup> SHC 1585/5, 13 February 1858.

<sup>87</sup> SHC 1585/6, 30 June 1861.

<sup>88</sup> SHC 1585/2, 2 May 1852.

<sup>89</sup> SHC 1585/2, 13 May 1852.

<sup>90</sup> 'Our Children's Holiday', *RSUM* (October 1867), p.232. Chubbiness was an important component of a healthy infant's appearance. Ware celebrated the fact that his first born son was 'fat & strong', while Mary Ware recorded that he was 'fine & fat'. SHC 1487/106/2, SHC 1576/18/1.

<sup>91</sup> 'Ragged Schools', *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 4 September 1846, 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>92</sup> Guthrie, *The City: Its Sins and Sorrows* (New York: Carter & Brothers, 1857), p. 54.

cheeks’.<sup>93</sup> In juxtaposing the contrary images of gauntness and wellness, Guthrie drew special attention to the tragic experiences of impoverished children. Watson gave a particularly haunting account of the appearance of the initial scholars that attended his first Aberdeen school, writing that they were ‘dwarfed in body and distorted in mind, with small head, big belly, and shrunk shanks’.<sup>94</sup> Given the lack of meat in their diets, it is probable that the ‘big belly’ Watson referenced was the result of a protein deficiency.

The references to particular scholars found in the documents of local schools are especially helpful in providing descriptions of those who attended. The Field Lane casebook reveals that the majority of boys at the school were physically slight. Although John Kirby was ‘Very strong and muscular’, even ‘athletic’, such descriptions were not the norm.<sup>95</sup> More representative descriptions are found in the entries for William Collins, who was ‘small in stature’, and William Ashmore, who was ‘Reduced to an awful state of debility’.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, Ware made several references to the children’s bodies in his journals, for instance noting that Eugene Brian was ‘very thin & emaciated’ and that another boy was ‘wasting away’.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps the most emotive account Ware provided was that of a boy of ‘6 or 7’ years, who was ‘wasted literally to skin & bone’ with limbs ‘like them of a skeleton’.<sup>98</sup> Of particular note when exploring the physicality of ragged school children is Ware’s custom of prefixing names with ‘little’, which, as recent scholarship has shown, was certainly not unique to him. In *Strange Dislocations* Steedman refers to the ‘delight in littleness’ and explores its emotive nature,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 97, *Platform Sayings, Anecdotes and Stories*, p. 52.

<sup>94</sup> Watson, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, John Kirby.

<sup>96</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, William Collins, William Ashmore.

<sup>97</sup> SHC1585/5, 22 November 1857, SHC 1585/6, 16 June 1861.

<sup>98</sup> SHC 1585/6, 13 November 1861.

describing ‘the complex register of affect that has been invested in the word “little”’.<sup>99</sup> Further, Jackson states that references to ‘littleness’ infantilised those to whom it referred, stressing a child’s vulnerability and fostering an emotive response in the adult.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Rogers writes in the context of Victorian juvenile offenders that ‘the term “little” was used pejoratively and sympathetically’, functioning to differentiate between ‘young offenders, confirmed in criminal habits’ and ‘neglected waifs, susceptible to but not yet tainted by “evil associations”’.<sup>101</sup> Given the context in this case, it is equally possible that the term referenced the children’s diminutive statures. Ware often reserved the word ‘little’ for certain boys whom he consistently described in this manner. One boy whom he referred to in this way on multiple occasions was ‘little W. Connor’, which perhaps indicates that something of the boy’s size or demeanour warranted this description.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, on 30 April 1854 Ware recorded that ‘Little Fitzgibbon begged for help – & cried very much: seemed half starved’.<sup>103</sup> It seems highly likely that ‘little Fitzgibbon’ was below average in size, as would be expected if he was indeed ‘half starved’. Yet, in line with Jackson’s observations, Ware’s use of ‘little’ here also draws attention to Fitzgibbon’s inability to help himself.

Compton Place sources provide rare access to the children’s perspectives on and responses to poverty. The majority of ragged school children shared the economic burden of their household and consequently shouldered the emotional stress that resulted. Whether this responsibility was expressed through a child’s insistence they work on the Sabbath or their

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<sup>99</sup> Steedman, *Strange Dislocations*, p. 150, p. 9.

<sup>100</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 56.

<sup>101</sup> Rogers, p. 72.

<sup>102</sup> SHC 1585/3, 11 June 1854.

<sup>103</sup> SHC 1585/3, 30 April 1854.



absence from school during the hopping season, financial responsibilities were integrated into their lives. Many Compton Place boys faltered under the pressure, such as Eugene Brian whose family experienced an especially difficult period in November 1857. During conversation with Ware, Brian ‘cried & said he was very unhappy and wanted “something to do”’.<sup>104</sup> In this statement Brian’s desire to help his family economically as well as his distress at his failure to do so is evident. Although Brian was taken into the school’s refuge, where he received a bed and regular meals, he continued to be upset by his parent’s suffering. Three months after Brian had cried and told Ware that he was ‘very unhappy’, Ware again noted that he ‘cried when I spoke to him about [his parents]’.<sup>105</sup> Notably, during the conversation Ware had informed Brian that his mother and father hadn’t eaten for two days.

Peer relationships within ragged schools could provide support and aid for those facing particularly difficult periods. Again, Ware’s journals are invaluable in giving access to the experiences of the children. On 5 December 1852 ‘W. Double’ came to school ‘almost starving’ and, upon seeing Double’s condition, ‘little H. Evans gave him a piece of bread which he had in his pocket’.<sup>106</sup> However, as touched on in the earlier discussion of rags, some boys were embarrassed by their need. Shame is detectable in Michael Murphy’s third letter after leaving London, in which he wrote ‘I ham sorry I ham oblight to meshen that I hevent a nuf to heat’.<sup>107</sup> Murphy’s embarrassment may be related to the fact that this letter was addressed ‘Dear friends’, and he therefore anticipated that it would be read aloud to his peers. A sense of shame among peers is found more explicitly in a journal entry recording a

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<sup>104</sup> SHC 1585/5, 22 November 1857.

<sup>105</sup> SHC 1585/5, 21 February 1858.

<sup>106</sup> SHC 1585/2, 5 December 1852.

<sup>107</sup> SHC 1487/145/3, 24 June 1855.

conversation between Ware and Charles Restieaux, during which the boy told his teacher that he concealed his inability to afford food from his workmates. Restieaux confided in Ware that he was often ‘ashamed to say he has nothing to eat & therefore asks for money [from peers] to go to the theatre but spends the money on something to eat’.<sup>108</sup> It is telling that even within a ragged school, which held poverty as an entry requirement, children could retain a sense of personal dignity that discouraged them from communication with others.

### **‘The Gait of a Confirmed and Incurable Cripple’: Disease and Disability**

As with most aspects of their appearance, the body of the street-child was described in terms of its deviation from normality, as the notion that the street-child’s body was unhealthy or damaged was regularly indicated.<sup>109</sup> In combination with their rags, dirtiness, and slight frames, the damaged and disfigured street-child comprised an emphatically pitiful image. Poor physical or mental health was linked to poverty across ragged school discourse, as poverty and bodily suffering were depicted as associated and complementary attributes. This is found in the case of the boy whose ‘naked limbs’ were ““goose-fleshed”” while his body was that of ‘a confirmed and incurable cripple’.<sup>110</sup> Likewise, Loughlin, that ‘real specimen of the street arab’, had both skin ‘begrimed with dirt’ and ‘feet in sores’.<sup>111</sup> The unhealthy body, like the naked or dirty body, played a core role in the movement’s discourse of transformation,

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<sup>108</sup> SHC 1585/1, 18 September 1850.

<sup>109</sup> The crippled street-child was a popular character that Dickens himself employed in *Bleak House*’s Poor Jo. Trevor Blount analyses the significance of Jo, arguing that he represented ‘a threat, if denied help, to the peace and prosperity of the nation as a whole’. Trevor Blount, ‘Poor Jo, Education, and the Problem of Juvenile Delinquency in Dickens’ “Bleak House”’, *Modern Philology*, 62:4 (1965), 325-339 (p. 332).

<sup>110</sup> ‘The Pavement Chalker’, *RSUM* (January 1854), p. 192.

<sup>111</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002, 5 April 1870.

conveying the Gospel's power and the movement's success. The disfigured street-child functioned as both an empathy-inducing image and, upon the child's recovery, a testament to the movement's success. When they entered the schools, the children were 'filthy and sickly' and suffering from 'defects incident to their wretched condition'. Yet, after receiving 'proper care' the same children were 'perfectly changed – strengthened and fit for work'; according to Watson, the very scholars who had been 'dwarfed in body and distorted in mind' were 'Healthful, active, and vigorous' when they left his school.<sup>112</sup> Evidently the unhealthy body was a useful image when constructing an emotive narrative regarding street-children; however, this does not indicate it was a fictitious one.

The history of the ragged school movement is inherently connected to the wider history of childhood illness and disability, and it provides a rare insight into the lives of unhealthy infants and juveniles prior to the increased regulation that followed the Education Acts after 1870.<sup>113</sup> As already referenced, the movement traced its establishment to Pounds. Pounds himself was left a 'cripple for life' after falling from a scaffold when he was fifteen, and he later became the carer of an orphaned nephew who possessed a 'delicate constitution' and feet that 'turned inwards and overlapped each other'.<sup>114</sup> Despite his nephew's disability he learned alongside his peers in Pounds's workshop, which was a model the later ragged schools followed. Given that the movement claimed its roots in Pounds, it is unsurprising

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<sup>112</sup> 'Ragged Schools – Emigration', *Standard*, 7 June 1848, Watson, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> Several scholars have touched on the state of education for the disabled following the Education Acts. Hendrick highlights the different facilities available to disabled children during the nineteenth century. Although specific institutions such as blind, deaf, and cripple schools existed, many others were not provided for. Hendrick, *Child welfare: Historical Dimensions*, pp. 49-56. Davin notes the impact frequent absences had upon the education of 'delicate' children and concurs with Hendrick on the fact that little provision was made for those with learning difficulties. Davin, p. 123.

<sup>114</sup> 'John Pounds Memorial Schools', *RSUM* (April 1864), p. 74.

that ragged school material drew attention to those children of a ‘delicate constitution’ that possessed ‘weakly and sickly moulds’.<sup>115</sup> Notably, following the establishment of Board Schools after 1870 the LRSU moved to focus on those ‘children of a peculiarly pitiful and crippled class, [that were] slipping completely through the meshes of the School Board net’.<sup>116</sup>

Contemporary studies of disability reveal its close link to economic situations. Tom Shakespeare references the ‘persisting poverty of disabled people’ and observes that ‘poverty and social exclusion make impairment worse and create additional impairments, particularly risk of mental illness’.<sup>117</sup> Disability is definable as “‘problems in body function or structure such as significant deviation or loss’”, with childhood disability also including ‘delays, deviations, and variations in expected growth and development’.<sup>118</sup> Stephen Rauch and Bruce Lanhear identify poverty as ‘one of the most significant risk factors for disabilities’ with specific reference to children.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, Peter Kirby’s research on the health of child workers in industrial Britain states that ‘Poverty was the overarching factor influencing the relative ill-health of children in urban and manufacturing districts’.<sup>120</sup> While referencing modern studies on the impact of maternal health upon infants, Kirby observes ‘Poorly nourished mothers gave birth to lower weight babies who were statistically more likely to suffer from poorer health throughout their lives’.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> ‘The Reaper’s Corner: Hope in Death’, *RSUM* (August 1850), p. 200, ‘The Cripples’ Home’, *RSUM* (November 1861), p. 264.

<sup>116</sup> Reid Howatt, p. 25. See also Heasman pp. 86-87.

<sup>117</sup> Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs* (Oxon: Routledge 2006), p. 45, p. 40.

<sup>118</sup> Neal Halfon and others, ‘The Changing Landscape of Disability in Childhood’, *The Future of Children*, 22:1 (2012), 13-42 (p.15).

<sup>119</sup> Stephen A. Rauch and Bruce P. Lanhear, ‘Prevention of Disability in Children: Elevating the Role of Environment’, *The Future of Children*, 22:1(2012), 193-217 (p. 198).

<sup>120</sup> Peter Kirby, *Child Workers and Industrial Health in Britain 1780-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), p. 39.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

Scholars in the recently emerging field of disability history underscore the topic's lack of clarity; Shakespeare highlights the potentially impermanent nature of disability, observing that 'Some people have impairments in childhood, but grow up to become non-disabled adults'. In Shakespeare's estimation 'The boundary between disabled people and non-disabled people is permeable in a way that gender boundaries or ethnic boundaries usually are not'.<sup>122</sup> Many ragged scholars were afflicted with congenital conditions or suffered long-term effects from illness or accident. Others suffered from disabling conditions for a short time. A large proportion of children referred to suffered from conditions that could be managed well and altered their lives minimally, while others were afflicted by illnesses that were debilitating or life-threatening. Moreover, Nadja Durbach's research on Victorian freak shows demonstrates the complex picture covered by the label of 'disability' and argues that it 'masks more than it reveals'.<sup>123</sup> Of particular relevance here is Durbach's argument that a binary understanding of a body as either able or disabled did not develop until the 1840s.<sup>124</sup> For convenience and practicality this section covers a broad range of health problems that have little in common besides their distinction from the 'normal' body.

Ragged school literature claimed that significant numbers of 'physically and mentally infirm children' attended the schools.<sup>125</sup> The *RSUM* argued that impoverished children were more likely to suffer from a physical disability; in an article entitled 'The Cripples' Home' readers were informed that 'though a Byron may occasionally be a cripple from childhood,

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<sup>122</sup> Shakespeare, p. 186.

<sup>123</sup> Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (California: University of California Press, 2010), p. 17.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>125</sup> 'The Cripples' Home, Hill Street', *RSUM* (January 1855), p. 69.

yet the children of the lower classes undeniably present a higher percentage of this infirmity'.<sup>126</sup> Although it is not possible to gain an accurate sense of the proportion of street-children that suffered from ill health, ragged school sources shed light on the nature of illnesses encountered and local sources give some indication as to how common health problems were. Furthermore, and perhaps most valuably, sources from local schools reveal how poor parents dealt with the illness of a child as well as how children responded to sickness in themselves or in their peers.

Reflecting the picture found in promotional literature, local schools regularly referenced the poor health of their scholars. Given the inadequacy of the children's diets noted above, it is unsurprising that their bodies suffered from the effects of both malnutrition and weakened immune systems. The terms 'delicate' and 'weakly' were used frequently. They appear in Ware's journals and the Field Lane casebook, unhelpfully covering a multitude of conditions and a wide breadth of severity. At Compton Place Ware utilised these terms in relation to several boys. He noted that William Grainger was a 'good boy but of delicate health' and Fred Harper a 'very weakly boy'.<sup>127</sup> Likewise, the Field Lane casebook described fourteen-year-old William Ford as both 'Small and delicate in health' and 'Very weak and of delicate health', and relayed a doctor's assessment that George Gander was "weakly & deformed".<sup>128</sup> Rickets was one of the more readily identifiable conditions that caused deformity in poor children; Kirby notes that urban smoke pollution exacerbated vitamin D deficiencies by blocking sunlight and causing 'widespread rickets' in children.<sup>129</sup> Ware's only

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> SHC 1585/7, 21 May 1865, SHC 1585/6, 14 June 1862.

<sup>128</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, William Ford, George Gander.

<sup>129</sup> Kirby, p. 37.

reference to rickets occurred on 1 December 1861. Upon hearing news of the imminent death of ‘Poor Johnny Shuttleworth’, Ware wrote that he ‘shall change his poor rickety limbs for an incorruptible body’.<sup>130</sup> The health conditions Ware referenced more frequently, such as stunted growth, poor eyesight, and skin sores, may have been likewise traceable to a lack of nutrients.

Those children deemed ‘weakly’ and ‘delicate’ were particularly vulnerable to the numerous infections and diseases that plagued urban slums, such as typhus, small pox, and scarlet fever. If a sufferer survived after contracting one of the above, it was possible that long-term damage could result. Scrofula was sufficiently common among the poor for Friedrich Engels to write in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* that it was “‘almost universal among the working class, and scrofulous parents have scrofulous children’”.<sup>131</sup> The condition commonly afflicted ragged school children, causing unsightly swellings on the neck that were quickly identifiable by knowledgeable observers. The *RSUM* told readers that many street-children were ‘debilitated by scrofula’, which it called that ‘frightful legacy of bad living and impure air’.<sup>132</sup> In Scotland it was listed as one of the diseases residing in Edinburgh’s wynds and closes by Bell, the medically-qualified secretary of Guthrie’s ragged school. Ware likewise identified scrofula among poor children in St. Pancras. He tentatively diagnosed the condition in a fifteen-year-old girl in April 1861, who he described as ‘a great sufferer from

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<sup>130</sup> SHC 1585/6, 1 December 1861.

<sup>131</sup> Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (1845; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 132. Kirby references this quotation from Engels to support his argument that scrofula was believed to be hereditary. In its original context, however, Engels is commenting upon the inadequate quality of food in poor households and inferring that scrofula ‘arises during childhood from impaired digestion’. Kirby, p. 51.

<sup>132</sup> Bell, p. 29, ‘The Cripples’ Home, Hill Street’, *RSUM* (January 1855), p. 70.

scrofula or something of that kind’, before adding that she had ‘lost one eye through it’.<sup>133</sup> Five years later Ware detailed that ‘A boy named Perry’ had been brought to the school by his mother after he was dismissed from a school in Charlton Street ‘for misconduct’. Ware gives no further information about his conversation with Perry’s mother, instead commenting bluntly on the boy: ‘He is very scrofulous & all his hair has come off & he is quite bald’.<sup>134</sup> Perry’s appearance evidently made an impact on Ware. When referencing the boy in October Ware again observed ‘– He is quite bald’, while in November he commenced an entry ‘Perry (the bald headed boy)’.<sup>135</sup>

The prevention of disease, rather than its cure, was a pertinent topic for those working with poor children. The first Vaccination Act was passed in 1840 with the aim to ‘extend the practice’ by introducing free vaccinations for the poor.<sup>136</sup> In 1853 a second Act made the vaccination of infants against small pox compulsory, and following further legislation in 1871 a 20s fine could be imposed upon uncooperative parents.<sup>137</sup> In the same year that the fine was introduced the *RSUM* drew attention to the problem of unvaccinated children, stating that the ‘matter of surprise is, not that small-pox should spread, but that any of the unvaccinated should escape it. The law enjoins vaccination, and prejudice and carelessness conspire to make the law a dead letter’. The publication described the failure to vaccinate a child as ‘the stolid resistance of the ignorant’, adding emotively that ‘the penalty of death is a heavy one

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<sup>133</sup> SHC 1585/6, 28 April 1861.

<sup>134</sup> SHC 1585/7, 15 July 1866.

<sup>135</sup> SHC 1585/7, 28 October 1866, SHC 1585/7, 11 November 1866.

<sup>136</sup> *Vaccination Extension. A Bill, Intituled, an Act to Extend the Practice of Vaccination*: PP. 1840 (152) III.733, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> *Vaccination Extension. A Bill [as Amended in Committee] Intituled as Act Further to Extend and Make Compulsory the Practice of Vaccination*: PP. 1852-53 (811) VII.481. *Vaccination Act (1867) Amendment. A Bill to Amend the Vaccination Act, 1867*: PP. 1871 (191) VI.559.



to inflict for mere neglect'.<sup>138</sup>

Durbach's research on the anti-vaccination movement in England highlights the widespread nature of opposition to 'what many considered tyrannical legislation'.<sup>139</sup> She argues that the response to legislation reveals 'widespread and cross-cultural concerns about the role of the state, the rights of the individual and the health and safety of the body'.<sup>140</sup> In specific relation to the bodies of poor children, Durbach asserts that vaccinations could prove 'potentially more harmful than beneficial' as inadequate nutrition heightened the vulnerability of working-class children to infections or complications following the 'invasive, insanitary, and sometimes disfiguring' procedure.<sup>141</sup> Gordon's research is again helpful as she explores how parents responded to vaccination legislation. In the context of early twentieth-century Boston, Gordon suggests that poor parents were not ignorant of the importance of vaccinations, but rather deeply suspicious of medical practitioners. In situations where children required hospital treatment, Gordon argues that 'this produced a doubled resistance; parents did not want to give up their children and feared not being able to get them back; they suspected the institutions themselves of cruel and negligent treatment'.<sup>142</sup>

Forcible intervention was sometimes deemed necessary to ensure a child was treated. On 23 February 1858 Ware noted that Hayward required treatment at the small pox hospital, yet the teacher charged with taking him found that the boy's mother 'had been drinking would not let him go'.<sup>143</sup> It was not until the doctor's direct involvement the following day that

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<sup>138</sup> 'The Small Pox Plague', *RSUM* (March 1871), p. 59.

<sup>139</sup> Durbach, *Bodily Matters: The Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> Gordon, p. 128.

<sup>143</sup> SHC 1585/5, 23 February 1858.

Hayward was taken for treatment, seemingly paid for by Ware. The following month Ware noted his relief, writing 'I am very thankful that he was taken in: It might have gone hard with him at home'.<sup>144</sup> Hayward entered the school's dormitory as a resident after his recovery, although the reason for this is not noted. In later entries Ware remarked that his mother caused 'trouble' when she 'came to the school drunk & I had some difficulty in getting rid of her'. Recording his interpretation of her emotions in his journal, Ware wrote 'She is very angry at Charles living away from her'.<sup>145</sup> Three weeks later Ware's entry reads 'Great trouble this week from Mrs Hayward', providing no further explanation.<sup>146</sup> Given the context of Mrs Hayward's later behaviour, her failure both to vaccinate her son and to seek medical attention upon his contraction of small pox may have stemmed from a fear of losing control of her son, rather than from ignorance. Five years after Ware's conflict with Mrs Hayward he detailed his mission to immunise the boys against small pox. He noted that twenty mothers had been advised to take their sons for vaccinations the following week and there is no indication of any objections.<sup>147</sup>

Given the environments in which street-children lived and worked, injuries were a daily possibility. Many poor children were frequently unsupervised, or were supervised by an older sibling. Such arrangements made accidents more likely as many children lacked caution or understanding around potential hazards. Ware's journals provide a small sample of the dangers the children navigated on a regular basis, either in their homes or on the streets. Over the seventeen years his journals cover, children fell from windows, suffered scalds, and were

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<sup>144</sup> SHC 1585/5, 24 February 1858, SHC 1585/5, 14 March 1858.

<sup>145</sup> SHC 1585/5, 3 May 1858.

<sup>146</sup> SHC 1585/5, 23 May 1858.

<sup>147</sup> SHC 1585/6, 26 April 1863.

nearly blinded by gunpowder.<sup>148</sup> Edward Drake was ‘shot by a Rifleman on Easter Monday on Hampstead Heath’, although he told Ware that ‘he did not feel it & went on playing till the other boys told him he had a hole in his pinafore’. Upon returning home, ‘The wound bled a good deal & was very sore’.<sup>149</sup> Canals and docks posed a particularly grave danger, which was highlighted in the *OCM*’s warnings to its young readers in the early months of 1860 about the risks of thin ice.<sup>150</sup> When David Gough went missing his parents ‘had bills posted’, fearing he had drowned in one of the city’s many canals.<sup>151</sup> Robert Worley, on the other hand, was indeed ‘nearly drowned’ when bathing in the Regent’s canal in May 1861 and was ‘taken out insensible’.<sup>152</sup> The streets themselves were filled with perils as preoccupied or inattentive children were easily knocked down.<sup>153</sup> Ware recorded in February 1854 that James Ward had been run over ‘owing to his own carelessness’. He noted that the vehicle’s wheel ‘went over his body’, before adding ‘I fear he is a good deal hurt’.<sup>154</sup> Ward survived the accident; however, a less fortunate case related to the youngest girl in the Barr family who was ‘run over by a cart & died in a few hours’. When Ware visited the household he found that her ‘corpse was lying in the room’, and observed that ‘She was about 2 years old’.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> SHC 1585/2, 24 December 1852, SHC 1585/2, 15 February 1852, SHC 1585/3, 7 December 1854.

<sup>149</sup> SHC 1585/ 6, 27 April 1862.

<sup>150</sup> Two stories in the *OCM* featured the dangers of thin ice over the winter of 1860, ‘Thin Place in the Ice’ and ‘The Noble Boy’. ‘Thin Place in the Ice’ tells the apparently true story of ice breaking, and causing six children to fall in the water. Of the six, two were drowned, two rescued, and two saved themselves. The narrator goes on to use the ice as a metaphor for wider social evils, saying that there are many ‘thin places’ in society, ‘where, in spite of all warning, many and many a boy slumps through, or makes a bold plunge to ruin’. ‘Thin Place in the Ice’, *OCM* (February 1860), p. 21, ‘The Noble Boy’, *OCM* (March 1860), p. 33.

<sup>151</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 June 1857. David Gough returned home unharmed and his parents learned that he had ran away to spend his wages unhindered.

<sup>152</sup> SHC 1585/6, 26 May 1861.

<sup>153</sup> Ware’s memoirs note the dangers presented by London traffic. After being knocked down and injured by a Hansom cab on 30 March 1890 Ware reflected: ‘I feel thankful that though I have lived in London all my life I have never been run over before’. SHC 1487/106/4.

<sup>154</sup> SHC 1585/2, 26 February 1854.

<sup>155</sup> SHC 1585/1, 19 July 1851.

Like Pounds himself, the health of many ragged school children was compromised by industrial accidents. Kirby writes that ‘Industrial injuries probably had the most damaging effect upon the lives of child workers’, although he laments the lack of thorough records detailing child injuries and deaths.<sup>156</sup> Before the LRSU was established Shaftesbury discussed the dangers of child labour in the House of Commons, describing how children in the mining industry suffered ‘Much crookedness’ while barely any of those engaged in lace-making ‘were quite sound in constitution’.<sup>157</sup> Many industries that utilised machinery caused wounds necessitating amputation, which was touched on in the *RSUM* in January 1851 in an article headed ‘Amputation of the Limb of a Ragged Scholar’.<sup>158</sup> The Field Lane casebook noted that fifteen-year-old William Ward lost ‘part of his hand’ after an incident on the railway, while the school’s beadle visited a ten-year-old boy whose left arm was removed at Guy’s Hospital (Appendix A: Figure 7).<sup>159</sup> Similarly, Ware’s journals contain a handful of serious injuries sustained in workplaces. While working on the roof of Dorchester house, a boy named Ryan ‘fell from the scaffolding (86ft)’ and sustained a significant injury that resulted in his left leg being ‘cut off & his [hip] disfigured’. When Ware visited the Ryan household he found that they faced serious economic hardship as the father had broken his leg shortly after his son’s

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<sup>156</sup> Kirby, p. 90.

<sup>157</sup> ‘House of Commons: The Labour of Children’, *Morning Post*, 5 August 1840, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> The article told the story of ‘Benjamin S\_\_\_\_\_’ who had been deprived ‘of the use of his left leg’ by an accident. ‘Amputation of the Limb of a Ragged Scholar’, *RSUM* (January 1851), p. 36.

<sup>159</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, William Ward, LMA 4060/E/01/002, 3 June 1870. In her research on disability in nineteenth century Chicago, Adrienne Phelps Coco states that accident rates among those working on railways ‘were so high that a minor disability such as a crushed or missing finger marked a man as an experienced and skilled laborer’. Adrienne Phelps Coco, ‘Diseased, Maimed, Mutilated: Categorizations of Disability and an Ugly Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Chicago’, *Journal of Social History*, 44:1 (2010), 23-37 (p. 28). The Field Lane casebook states that William Cullen’s father was ‘killed on Railway at East Moulsey leaving his mother with eight children’. LMA CLC225/MS/05754A, William Cullen.

injury; it is unsurprising that Ware entered their home bearing coal tickets.<sup>160</sup> An especially severe incident occurred at a printing office in March 1863 when David Ramsay's arm was caught in the machinery and he 'was nearly killed'.<sup>161</sup> It can be reasonably deduced from Ware's writing that the boy's recovery took some time as he was not mentioned again for thirteen months.<sup>162</sup> Girls were also at risk in the workplace, as demonstrated in Ware's entry regarding the eldest daughter in the Schurer family, Matilda. In December 1861 Ware wrote that Matilda died following prolonged exposure to arsenic in the green dye used in the artificial flower factory where she worked.<sup>163</sup> Alongside this entry Ware made a note that the case featured in *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper* the same day under the title 'Poison in Artificial Flowers'.<sup>164</sup>

Ragged school children were not only diverse in terms of their physicality. Children suffered developmental problems related to speech, with both Field Lane and Compton Place noting cases of stammers.<sup>165</sup> Further, children were often described in terms of 'mental deficiency', as in the 1849 description of 'That wither'd, wasted, spectre *child*, gaunt, with its idiot leer'.<sup>166</sup> Twenty years later the *RSUM* published a story about an 'idiot' child, entitled 'Matt the Idiot Boy', in which a street-boy informed a kind stranger in reference to himself

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<sup>160</sup> SHC 1585/2, 30 January 1853. Ware noted that the accident itself happened the day before the Duke of Wellington's funeral, 17 November 1852.

<sup>161</sup> SHC 1585/6, 24 March 1863.

<sup>162</sup> SHC 1585/7, 17 April 1864.

<sup>163</sup> SHC 1585/6, 1 December 1861.

<sup>164</sup> 'Poison in Artificial Flowers', *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 1 December 1861. The article describes how during the post-mortem it was found that her body was 'a greenish yellow colour. The eyes were also of that colour. The nails were very green, and the countenance of a particularly anxious character'.

<sup>165</sup> The Field Lane casebook reveals that Robert Mandley 'stammers much', while Ware recorded that both John Millington, already mentioned above, and W. Slater stammered. In reference to Slater, Ware wrote that he 'was at my class but stammered so badly he could not read'. Ware also noted that one boy struggled to speak on account of a cleft palate. LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, Robert Mandley, SHC 1585/6, 16 August 1863, SHC 1585/7, 19 June 1864, SHC 1585/6, 30 January 1864.

<sup>166</sup> 'Poetry: Unto This Work We Are Called', *RSUM* (May 1849), p. 92.

that “‘Matt was looking for God. Matt wants to see God’”. At the close of the story, Matt died cold and homeless, yet ‘happy, for, like many a Ragged School scholar, he had laid upon the gospel message’.<sup>167</sup> At the core of this morbid story is the assertion that even ‘idiot’ children had a place within a ragged school, and were equally capable of fostering a meaningful faith.

In his research on lay attitudes towards mentally deficient children in Victorian England David Wright argues that few schools welcomed what he terms “slow” children, with some Sunday schools dismissing them when they failed to show academic ability.<sup>168</sup> In contrast, the Field Lane casebook demonstrates through its descriptions of the children’s educational achievements that those who made little progress were neither unwelcome nor dismissed. Of the 47 boys mentioned in the casebook, approximately half could read and write. Some demonstrated exceptional ability, such as Edward Payne who was ‘Well educated. Full of information. Intelligent’, and William Cullen, a ‘promising lad’, who ‘Reads and writes well’.<sup>169</sup> Others could read well and write a little; although William Ford was ‘Quick and intelligent’ and accomplished in reading, he could only write ‘imperfectly’.<sup>170</sup> Many boys, like James Coleman and James Hardy, could read but not write.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, the casebook demonstrates the broad variation in aptitude among those who could neither read nor write. At the time of his entry into the refuge, fourteen-year-old George Crockett could ‘neither read nor write’. When he sailed for Canada a year later it was noted that he had ‘Failed to

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<sup>167</sup> ‘Matt the Idiot Boy’, *RJUM* (November 1869), pp. 253-255.

<sup>168</sup> David Wright, “‘Childlike in His Innocence’: Lay Attitudes to “Idiots” and “Imbeciles” in Victorian England’, in *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities*, ed. by David Wright and Anne Digby (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 118-133 (p. 125).

<sup>169</sup> LMA CMC/225/MS05754A, Edward Payne, William Cullen.

<sup>170</sup> LMA CMC/225/MS05754A, William Ford.

<sup>171</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, James Coleman, James Hardy.

learn to read, but stored his memory with much intelligence'.<sup>172</sup> Similarly, the casebook detailed that Thomas Clark 'Can neither read nor write', although he was 'Very expert as a Carpenter'.<sup>173</sup>

Conversely, however, the casebook also contains one entry of a boy who was able to read but unable to understand. John Farrell, who had spent his early years in the St. James Workhouse, was described as 'depressed both physically and mentally' with 'Intellectual faculties much below the average' (Appendix A: Figure 8). It was recorded that he 'Reads very well, but comprehends but little'. Following Farrell's emigration to Canada in 1857, the casebook conveys a tentative sense of hope about his future, noting that "He became hardy and industrious and it may be hoped honest. After so many years of a precarious life, it is hoped that he will never relapse into his former vagrant habits". However, in the same year of his arrival in Canada Farrell was dismissed from his position as a farmhand and described as 'Evidently not in his right mind'.<sup>174</sup> In the case of John Farrell, his life in both England and Canada was dictated by his learning difficulties.

Ware's journals contain several cases where a condition severely affected a child's daily life, such as the boy who was both deaf and blind in one eye referenced by Ware in passing.<sup>175</sup> In May 1858 Ware recorded a visit he made to Mrs Watson who was ill with rheumatic fever. During the visit she implored Ware, in the case of her death, to take care of her son who was resident in the London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. Although he felt

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<sup>172</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, George Crockett.

<sup>173</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, Thomas Clark.

<sup>174</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, John Farrell.

<sup>175</sup> SHC 1585/7, 6 May 1865.

unable to make such a promise, he did assure her that he ‘would call & see about him’.<sup>176</sup> Other children managed their conditions and chose work that they would be able to carry out. For instance, John Matthew Turner was described in the Field Lane casebook as ‘Hard of hearing’, with the writer commenting that ‘deafness was his only drawback’. Consequently, Turner trained in industries that he could fulfil despite his hearing difficulties, including baking, carpentry, and tailoring; upon arrival in Canada Turner worked as a baker.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, after Ryan was deprived of a leg in an accident Ware arranged for him to be trained in book-keeping, likely because of the sedentary nature of any ensuing employment.<sup>178</sup>

Poor health could have a significant impact on a child’s self-esteem. Those who were confined to hospital beds were unable to socialise with other children and fell behind in their ragged school education. When Ware visited a boy named Sucksmith in hospital, the matron informed the teacher that Sucksmith was ‘as bad as he could be’ and she ‘feared he would not recover’. In his journal Ware noted that the boy ‘was quite delirious’, though ‘[he] knew me & said he would come to school in a few days’. When Sucksmith was told by the matron that he ‘must lie quiet & not get out of bed’, he responded “‘If you will let me go to school this evening I will lie quiet all night’”.<sup>179</sup> Sucksmith died just six days later.<sup>180</sup> This instance demonstrates the value that one ill child placed on his ragged school, giving an insight into the stabilising role that the schools could play in the lives of its students. On the other hand, bullying associated with ill health or physical difference could make the ragged school a place

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<sup>176</sup> SHC 1585/5, 23 May 1858.

<sup>177</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, John Matthew Turner.

<sup>178</sup> SHC 1585/ 2, 27 March 1853. Book-keeping was one of the skills acquired by disabled civil war veterans in Chicago, alongside teaching and telegraph operating. Phelps Coco, ‘Diseased, Maimed, Mutilated’, p. 29.

<sup>179</sup> SHC 1585/1, 29 July 1851.

<sup>180</sup> SHC 1585/1, 4 August 1851.



to run from, rather than to. This appears to have been the case for Sam Peacock in May 1853. Ware described a conversation he had with Peacock, who said he absconded from school 'because the boys laughed at him because of his bad hand'. At the close of this entry, however, Ware noted his scepticism, writing 'I suspect he wanted to go to the fair...'.<sup>181</sup> Ware was notably more sympathetic in the case of Spundley, who suffered from 'weak & withered' ankles that necessitated at least two operations.<sup>182</sup> Spundley was ill-treated and rejected by a number of employers; in January 1853 Ware gave Mr Clark "compensation" for his disappointment after he asked for 'another boy'.<sup>183</sup> It is striking that when Ware organised a new position for Spundley in July of the same year the boy turned it down, telling Ware that 'he does not think he is a good workman enough'.<sup>184</sup> It is possible that the treatment Spundley had received from employers led him to question his capabilities despite Ware's encouragement.

The causes of physical and psychological disorders are complex, yet it is not unreasonable to suggest a connection between a childhood marred by deprivation and the health problems that later plagued adulthood. Although it was mentioned earlier that illness was used as part of a wider discourse of transformation, many of those who worked with the children acknowledged that a large proportion of the children's health problems would likely endure past their time at the school. Ware himself noted the bleak future that Shuttleworth would have had if he had survived to adulthood, writing that his death was 'a mercy to him

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<sup>181</sup> SHC 1585/2, 22 May 1853.

<sup>182</sup> SHC 1585/3, 23 October 1853.

<sup>183</sup> SHC 1585/2, 16 January 1853.

<sup>184</sup> SHC 1585/3, 24 July 1853.

for he never would have been a healthy man', adding 'I trust he is now happy'.<sup>185</sup> As was seen in the previous section, while at Compton Place James Ward became ill after eating pork because his 'almost starving stomach' was too delicate.<sup>186</sup> When Ward was an emigrant in Canada five years later he wrote in his third letter to Ware that he had recently suffered from a fever, adding tentatively 'I think I am all right again'. At the close of the same letter he apologised for his poor handwriting by stating that his 'hand shake so', and explaining 'for it only last week I got out of bed'.<sup>187</sup> In a letter sent the following year, Ward noted that his health had been 'pretty good' over the winter, 'except I had the Rheumatism in my right arm for while'.<sup>188</sup> Although there were undoubtedly many factors that contributed to Ward's temperamental health, the privation of his early years is likely to have been a significant component.

In *Death in the Victorian Family* Pat Jalland observes that the Victorian 'preoccupation with death was understandable – an honest realism given relatively high mortality rates'.<sup>189</sup> It is unsurprising that mortality rates were 'disproportionately high' among the poor given the unsanitary living conditions that many poor households were subjected to.<sup>190</sup> The matter of death was frequently addressed with a blunt frankness in working-class families that could, in Julie Marie Strange's words, be 'shocking to middle-class sensibilities'.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, Burnett's study of working-class childhoods between 1820 and 1920 suggests that death was a

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<sup>185</sup> SHC 1585/6, 8 December 1861.

<sup>186</sup> SHC 1585/3, 20 March 1854.

<sup>187</sup> SHC 1585/141/3, 12 July 1859.

<sup>188</sup> SHC 1585/141/6, 8 April 1860.

<sup>189</sup> Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>190</sup> Julie Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 28.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

commonplace feature of children's lives. In studying autobiographies and diaries Burnett found that 'play and death are strangely mixed', as in those instances in which 'autobiographers record playing at funerals, making toy coffins and telling jokes about death'.<sup>192</sup> It is noteworthy that even as adult mortality rates fell at the end of the nineteenth century, childhood continued to be an especially dangerous period. Jalland notes that mortality figures fell from 21.8 per 1,000 in 1868 to 14.8 in 1908, yet infants made up a quarter of all recorded deaths at the end of the century.<sup>193</sup>

Ragged school sources are filled with the names of children who never reached adulthood. The anticipation of death among the children is inferred in Greenock ragged school's committee minutes from 1851, which note 'only one of the large number in attendance (a consumptive girl) died'.<sup>194</sup> Ware's habit of marking a child's surname followed by 'R. I. P' in his journal margin is demonstrative of the frequency of death among the boys of Compton Place. He frequently recorded the death of local children, for instance upon visiting the Clarke family in July 1851 he 'found the youngest child had died the day before' and witnessed her 'laid out in RC style with flowers, candles &c.'. <sup>195</sup> Six years later Ware visited young John Glynn and found that 'His mother has just lost her baby', which he saw 'lying in a coffin'.<sup>196</sup> A particularly telling example regarding the children's familiarity with death is found in Ware's journal entries following Sucksmith's death. Ware wrote on Monday 4 August 1851 that 'Poor Sucksmith died this morning at ½ past 10', and the following Sunday

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<sup>192</sup> Burnett, *Destiny Obscure*, p. 34. Strange also comments on this phenomenon, writing 'it was not uncommon for children to "play at" funerals'. Strange, p. 30.

<sup>193</sup> Jalland, p. 5.

<sup>194</sup> *Greenock Ragged School Second Annual Report*, p. 11.

<sup>195</sup> SHC 1585/1, 14 July 1851. 'RC' here is Ware's shorthand for 'Roman Catholic'.

<sup>196</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 April 1857.

a dozen boys from Compton Place attended the boy's burial in St. Giles' churchyard.<sup>197</sup> Ware evidently felt that the occasion warranted a lecture on the Gospel as he 'Spoke to them on the Resurrection'; the death of one of the boys no doubt reminded Ware of the urgency of salvation, especially for such fragile children. However, he despondently recorded in his journal that the boys 'were not very attentive owing to a great noise in the Court which distracted them'. Perhaps as an afterthought he ended with the statement that 'The boys do not seem to mind the death of a companion much more than if they were a covey of partridges', conveying the normality of death among the boys and Ware's own discomfort about this.<sup>198</sup>

The premature deaths of street-children featured prominently in ragged school publications, appearing in both literature targeted at adult supporters and material aimed at the children themselves. Stories and poems such as 'Fitness for Death', 'Little Bessie', 'The Dying Child', and 'The Dying Ragged School Scholar' connected street-children with scenes of death bed conversions.<sup>199</sup> The 1852 edition of the *OCM* informed its young readers:

You cannot tell the day,  
When you will have to die,  
It can't be very far away,  
It may be very nigh.<sup>200</sup>

Although such narratives were part of a wider evangelical discourse that encouraged young readers to realise their mortality and consider their salvation, this interpretation dismisses the

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<sup>197</sup> SHC 1585/1, 4 August 1851.

<sup>198</sup> SHC 1585/1, 10 August 1851. In the margin beside this note is a faded pencil cross that may indicate a later retraction of this statement.

<sup>199</sup> 'Fitness for Death', *OCM* (July 1867), pp. 109-110, 'Little Bessie', *RSUM* (June 1864), pp. 142-143, 'The Dying Child', *OCM* (January 1860), pp. 15-16, 'The Dying Ragged School Scholar' *OCM* (May 1859), pp. 65-68.

<sup>200</sup> 'The Dying Year', *OCM* (December 1852), p. 186.

broader context in which the children lived. Laqueur notes in reference to Sunday schools that the ‘assurance of salvation and the community of their fellows provided students with psychological strength to face the all too familiar spectre of death and disease’.<sup>201</sup> As well as encouraging readers to seek salvation, ragged school literature addressed the fact that death was encountered by poor children on a regular basis. Just as the literature addressed issues like bullying and hunger, death was featured because of its pertinence to the children’s lives. Exemplifying this, in April 1862 the *OCM* featured a poem entitled ‘Who Took the Baby’ that dealt with the issue of infant mortality. The poem begins with a question from a child whose sibling had died:

“Mother,” one day said little Sue,  
“When our dear little baby died,  
And had to leave your loving arms,  
Who took her on the other side?”

Little Sue’s mother then responded:

“O Susy, when God’s children die,  
Jesus, who died their souls to save,  
Receives them in his own kind arms,  
And bears them safe across the wave”.<sup>202</sup>

This poem not only directed its readers’ thoughts towards their mortality, but it offered aid to those who might experience the death of a sibling. Although Ware had noted how the boys at Sucksmith’s funeral seemed acclimatised to death, many others were unquestionably concerned about the wellbeing of siblings, as Michael Murphy was when ‘in great distress about his little sister’ when she was admitted to the workhouse infirmary.<sup>203</sup> On 8 May 1853

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<sup>201</sup> Laqueur, p. 161.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Who Took the Baby’, *OCM* (April 1862), p. 55.

<sup>203</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851.

Ware noted that Peter Carpenter had come to the school and informed him that his little sister was dying, though she is unnamed by Ware.<sup>204</sup> No further information is given regarding Carpenter's siblings until 1856 when he sent his first letter to Ware after joining the navy, which ended with the postscript: 'P.S. Give my kindest love to my little Sister Emma'.<sup>205</sup> Two years later, Carpenter wrote to seek Ware's help regarding his sister, writing 'Mr Ware my Brother ave wight to mee tell mee that my Grandmother as Ben Baven Bad to my lettell sister Pleas Mr Ware to anser this Letter and let mee now ow things is garn'.<sup>206</sup> Evidently Carpenter had a significant emotional connection with his younger sister; although illness and death may have been perceived as normal by some, the suffering of loved ones was not met with coldness by all.

### **'No Father, No Mother, No Home': Ragged School Families**

Children like 'motherless' Loughlin abound in ragged school literature, starring in stories such as 'The Orphan and His Bible', 'The Orphan Ragged Scholar', 'The Sufferings of an Orphan', and 'Twelve Orphan Boys'.<sup>207</sup> 'The Ragged School Boy' poem published in the movement's magazine stated 'No father, no mother, no home had the boy', while the child featured in 'The Orphan Ragged Scholar' had "never knew his mother's love, nor prized her kiss so fond

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<sup>204</sup> SHC 1585/2, 8 May 1853.

<sup>205</sup> SHC 1487/123/1.

<sup>206</sup> SHC 1487/123/3. The word 'behaving' has been pencilled in above Carpenter's own 'Baven', implying that Ware had some difficulty when deciphering the writing.

<sup>207</sup> 'The Orphan and His Bible', *OCM* (March 1852) p. 46, 'The Orphan Ragged Scholar', *RSUM* (January 1853), p. 129, 'The Sufferings of an Orphan', *RSUM* (November 1862), p. 255, 'Twelve Orphan Boys', *RSUM* (January 1855), p. 209.

and warm”’.<sup>208</sup> Hall used very similar imagery when he stated that many poor children knew ‘little of a father’s protecting arm, of a mother’s tender care’.<sup>209</sup> They were ‘unloved, uncared for’, ‘unprotected spirits, ushered into the world with nothing in their hands but weapons for their own destruction’.<sup>210</sup> Such emotive language was undoubtedly intended to provoke an emotive response in its audience.

The placeless orphan was a powerful nineteenth-century construct. Laden with social significance, the orphan street-child both threatened domestic stability and aroused charitable concern. Carpenter made particular use of orphan imagery in her widely published 1861 lecture, *What Shall We Do with Our Pauper Children?*. In its very title Carpenter stressed society’s responsibility towards the parentless child. Within the body of the text she moved on to draw on the social anxiety that surrounded the orphan. Carpenter asked her audience ‘How can an orphan child brought up in a Workhouse School know what are the rights and duties of property’, after which she asserted ‘They are our pauper children, and if we neglect our duty to them we shall suffer for it’.<sup>211</sup> Alongside her assertion that the children posed a threat, Carpenter also stressed their status as innocent victims of circumstances, ‘placed in their present position by circumstances over which they have no control’.<sup>212</sup> Such language distanced the children from their natural parents, allowing them to be perceived as innocents. The orphaned street-child was simultaneously a figure requiring protection and a figure from

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<sup>208</sup> ‘Poetry: The Ragged School Boy’, *RSUM* (April 1850), p. 94, ‘The Orphan Ragged Scholar’, *RSUM* (January 1853), p. 129.

<sup>209</sup> G. Hall, p.22.

<sup>210</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002, 5 April 1870, ‘Ragged Schools of London’, *British Mother’s Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p. 48, ‘The Causes at Work for the Perpetuity and Increase of Immorality in the Metropolis’, *RSUM*, (February 1850) p. 46.

<sup>211</sup> Carpenter, “*What Shall We Do with Our Pauper Children?*” *A Paper Read at the Social Science Association, Dublin, August, 1861* (London: Longman, Brown & Paternoster Row, 1861), pp. 4-5.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

which society needed to be protected. As mentioned earlier, scholars including Cunningham and Jackson argue that the street-child was paradoxically pitied and feared.<sup>213</sup> The amalgamation of pitiful and fearful imagery is nowhere more apparent in ragged school discourse than when associated with the orphan.

In her article on Great Ormond Street Hospital, Katharina Boehm argues that the orphan played a central role in fundraising for the renowned medical institution. She writes that ‘the various narratives about Great Ormond Street published in the 1850s and 1860s can all be read as variations on the same theme’, one which revolved around ‘A child, who is either an actual orphan or a quasi-orphan through parental neglect’.<sup>214</sup> The fictional nature of the Great Ormond Street orphan is highlighted by Boehm, who notes that ‘There is no historical evidence to support the idea that homeless street children made up the majority of in-patients of the hospital. On the contrary, the institution’s registration books show that nearly all patients had a permanent address’.<sup>215</sup> Similarly, Lydia Murdoch’s *Imagined Orphans* demonstrates that a common narrative was produced by child welfare institutions that depicted impoverished children as orphaned or abandoned, although, as Murdoch infers in the title of her monograph, such accounts were often fictional.<sup>216</sup>

Maclagan’s *Ragged School Rhymes* is a prime example of the ‘orphanisation’ of poor children that Murdoch describes. Within his introduction Maclagan claims to have produced the book in order to obtain ‘the sympathy of a few warm hearts’, identifying his audience as

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<sup>213</sup> Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor*, p. 106, Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> Katharina Boehm, “‘A Place for More Than the Healing of Bodily Sickness’: Charles Dickens, the Social Mission of Nineteenth-Century Paediatrics and the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children”, *Victorian Review*, 35:1 (2009), 153-174 (p. 169).

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>216</sup> Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006).



the comfortable middle class ‘who sit on a wild winter night, by a social, cheerful fire’.<sup>217</sup> The opening epigraph establishes the image that the children are vulnerable and uncared for, which permeates the book. A succinct quotation from Bishop Horsley tells how the children “‘perish in the open streets, of cold and hunger, and of broken hearts’”.<sup>218</sup> The rhymes themselves identify the children as orphans, with the first poem, ‘The Lost Found’, featuring a ‘servant of the Lord’ who instructs a street-child to “‘bring thy parents hither, boy’”, only for the child to respond “‘Alas! I have no parents, sir’”.<sup>219</sup> Likewise, ‘The City Arabs’ recounts the conversation of two orphan match-sellers as one said to the other:

[The sun’s] kind looks are the only looks  
Of kindness that we know.  
We’ll call the sun our father, Tom!  
We’ll call the sun our mother!<sup>220</sup>

When figures from individual schools are consulted it is evident that orphans comprised a surprisingly small proportion of scholars. Of the boys included in the Field Lane casebook, 40 per cent were described as an ‘orphan’. Each boy in the refuge was there because it was felt he was not receiving sufficient care elsewhere, either through parental desertion, destitution, or death. It is worth noting that many ragged school sources do not make the children easily divisible into orphans and non-orphans. In the case of Field Lane’s casebook, those deserted by parents were not classified as orphans.<sup>221</sup> Similarly, the sixteenth annual

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<sup>217</sup> Maclagan, p. v.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>221</sup> Several boys had a living parent who was unsupportive. Although no details are given relating to Ebenezer Davis’s mother, his father was described as ‘a dissolute bad character’ in Lambeth Workhouse. Similarly, Harry Johnson’s father was living in Australia and working as ‘a play actor’; however, no information was provided about his mother. LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, Ebenezer Davis, Harry Johnson.

report of Greenock ragged school recorded that 23 children only had a mother, '9 have Fathers only in life, 4 of whom are deserted by Father', 18 had both a mother and father, and ten were categorised as orphans.<sup>222</sup> Like Field Lane, Greenock restricted the use of 'orphan' to those whose parents had died. In 1850 the Westminster ragged school recorded of its scholars that '6 are orphans, 35 fatherless, 20 motherless, 39 have both parents living, 3 have fathers transported'.<sup>223</sup> The qualitative data in Ware's journals is especially useful when assessing the prominence of orphans within ragged school communities. Only a handful of children were categorised as 'orphans' by Ware over the seventeen years that he maintained his journal. He noted in May 1852 that Patrick Horan stayed in Golden Lane refuge because he was an orphan, and during their time at the school the Connor brothers were orphaned when their mother died in St. Pancras Workhouse<sup>224</sup>. In 1867 Ware recorded the plight of the Julian children when he noted that one of the Julians 'came to the school to try to get his sister into some school', adding their 'father & mother are both dead'. The eldest Julian child, whose age is not given, supported his siblings by 'trying to keep up the shop'. Ware notes, however, that he 'wastes the money & has failed' and as a consequence the family, 'some of whom are quite children', were forced to 'go into the House'.<sup>225</sup>

In her research on the experiences of poor children Davin highlights the resourcefulness of many families and households, with relatives and neighbours providing temporary or long-term assistance where necessary. Davin writes that 'versatile households'

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<sup>222</sup> *Greenock Ragged School Sixteenth Annual Report 1864-1865* (Greenock: Greenock Ragged School Association, 1865), p. 5.

<sup>223</sup> 'Westminster Ragged School', *The Times* 24 April 1850, p. 5.

<sup>224</sup> SHC 1585/2, 30 May 1852.

<sup>225</sup> SHC 1585/7, 12 May 1867.

were a way of life for the poor, arguing that neighbours, where possible, protected children from the workhouse through ‘providing temporary refuge’. She observes that ‘It was not unusual for a child to join another household, sometimes as an arrangement of mutual convenience, often as a result of crisis or bereavement’.<sup>226</sup> Timely aid from an aunt or friend could prevent the workhouse being resorted to, avoiding the circumstances that the Julian children found themselves in. When his mother was dying in St. Pancras workhouse William Connor sought haven with his cousin.<sup>227</sup> Another boy was cared for by his uncle following his mother’s death, yet ‘proved so utterly unmanageable that he was returned to his father’.<sup>228</sup> There was no template for the street-child’s family. Rather, households formed workable solutions to situations and crises.

Female-headed households were prominent in poor communities. The single mother’s household often faced particularly great economic hardship. As Gordon demonstrates, the absence of a male breadwinner made poverty highly likely and it is therefore unsurprising that many ragged school scholars were fatherless. Gordon observes that the absence of a supporting male figure often made ‘neglect’ inevitable as mothers struggled to fulfil the contradictory roles of ‘raising and providing for children in a society organized on the premise of male breadwinning and female domesticity’. Because of this, many mothers were trapped in a ‘double bind’, unable to satisfactorily fulfil either expectation.<sup>229</sup> The ongoing poverty of Mrs East and her sons in Ware’s journals exemplifies this struggle; in

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<sup>226</sup> Davin, pp. 39-40.

<sup>227</sup> SHC 1585/3, 16 July 1854.

<sup>228</sup> SHC 1585/5, 29 May 1858. There is no indication why the boy was placed with his uncle rather than his father following his mother’s death, although it’s likely economic factors were crucial in the decision.

<sup>229</sup> Gordon, p. 83, p. 89.

1851 one of the East boys informed Ware that he and his brothers worked at night “because their mother has no money with which to get breakfast for them”.<sup>230</sup>

The significant role mothers played in ragged school communities is further demonstrated in the importance that the movement attributed to ‘mothers’ meetings’. The *RSUM* described these gatherings in 1859 as ‘one of the most useful and salutary branches of Ragged School operations’, while their exponential increase was detailed later the same year at the LRSU’s fifteenth anniversary where it was stated that the groups had increased from 15 in 1858 to 63 the following later.<sup>231</sup> Moreover, despite the prominence of orphans, not to mention neglectful mothers, in ragged school narratives, when the LRSU faced criticism in 1850 the children’s mothers were central in defending the schools. The LRSU related the words of impoverished mothers who testified to the ‘immense benefits conferred by the schools’.<sup>232</sup> When a public meeting was held by the Westminster ragged school to gauge the experiences of parents, the majority of the 240 strong audience was reportedly composed of mothers.<sup>233</sup> Among the statements from parents, was that of a Mrs Carr who said that her children had attended the school and she ‘was very happy to think the gentlemen connected with the school had been so kind to her children, who were now fatherless’.<sup>234</sup> Ware’s journals convey similar stories, as such widowed or single mothers as Mrs Chapman, Mrs East, Mrs Leonard, Mrs Restieaux, and Mrs Smith, to name a small number, drew on the school’s resources.

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<sup>230</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851.

<sup>231</sup> ‘A Word about Mother’s Meetings’, *RSUM* (February 1859), p.38, ‘The Fifteenth Anniversary of the Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (June 1859), p. 106.

<sup>232</sup> *Crime and its Causes: A Reply to the Attacks of the Morning Chronicle on the London Ragged Schools* (London: Blackburn & Burt Printers, 1850), p. 19.

<sup>233</sup> The meeting was attended by 130 mothers and 60 fathers, with 50 friends and teachers. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

The children of female-headed households were particularly likely to be tarnished with the stigma of ‘illegitimacy’, the impact of which Ginger Frost explores.<sup>235</sup> Illegitimacy was a status Ware often noted, as he did in the case of Mrs Gee’s son who he observed ‘seems to be illegitimate’.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, after visiting Mrs Murphy, whose son attended the school, Ware recorded his suspicions, writing ‘Mrs Murphy was there with a baby at the breast (q: How comes it? She has been a widow this 3 years)’.<sup>237</sup> Ware did, however, express a sense of sympathy towards such children, as evident in his detective-like entry regarding William Spundley, made just seven days after the above encounter with Mrs Murphy:

I forgot to mention that on Thursday I obtained W. Spundley’s Baptismal certificate – at least what his mother says is his baptism – He was born in St. P. workhouse on 27 July 1837 baptised under name of W. Smith on 17 August – His mother’s name was Margt. Eliza [illegible and heavily crossed out] Bowler, his reputed father Pratt (whether dead or alive she would not say) baptised under name of Smith for concealment. She married King who was a small tradesman & was the f. of George: & afterwards her present husband Benjamin Spundley: all of which above names poor William has successively borne<sup>238</sup>

This entry highlights the temporary nature of names, which could be altered according to a new partner in their mother’s life or, as indicated by Ware, ‘for concealment’. New names could hide pasts and allow fresh identities to be forged, which was often appealing to ragged school emigrants. Further, the case of Spundley also demonstrates the isolating effect of

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<sup>235</sup> Ginger Frost’s work on illegitimacy highlights the emotional stress this could result in, arguing that mothers sometimes resented the financial and social burden that the child represented. Ginger Frost, “The Black Lamb of the Black Sheep”: Illegitimacy in the English Working Class 1850-1939’, *Journal of Social History*, 37:2 (2003), 293-322.

<sup>236</sup> SHC 1585/7, 9 December 1866.

<sup>237</sup> SHC 1585/1, 20 April 1851.

<sup>238</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851.

illegitimacy as Ware would later record that the boy was addressed as ‘bastard’ by the family he was apprenticed to.<sup>239</sup>

## Conclusion

By using promotional literature alongside material from local schools, this chapter has demonstrated the stereotypical manner in which street-children were portrayed to the public. The beadle’s assessment of Loughlin as ‘a real specimen of the street arab’ has proven a helpful construct when investigating the depiction of poor children, highlighting that they were defined according to their want.<sup>240</sup> Loughlin, as a ‘real specimen’, was motherless, injured, and clothed in rags and dirt. The children’s appearance was given particular significance, with attention being focused on rags, skin, and dirt in promotional literature as markers that carried broader connotations of deviancy and otherness. In the context of the ragged school movement such imagery simultaneously conveyed the transformative effect of the institutions, acting as a linguistic tool to convey the Gospel’s power. In such narratives the naked were clothed, the dirty were washed clean, and the sick were healed.

This chapter has moved beyond the accounts found in promotional literature to reveal the lived experiences of the children that ragged schools sought to help. In contrast with the stereotype of the orphaned street-child, ragged school scholars frequently came from versatile and malleable households. The children’s own words and responses preserved in Ware’s journals provide a poignant insight into the distressing impact poverty could have; the

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<sup>239</sup> SHC 1585/2, 2 May 1852.

<sup>240</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002, 5 April 1870.

discomfort, embarrassment and shame it caused is demonstrated repeatedly in his conversations with scholars. Likewise, the children's testimonies reveal the economic burden scholars carried in supporting their households, especially in female-headed families. Moreover, this chapter has highlighted the active role children played in seeking economic assistance. Whether through begging for alms from the public or petitioning ragged school teachers, children sought out the help that was available. In contrast with narratives that cast poor children as pitiful subjects, their ability to manipulate or influence their audience asserts their status as actors.

Of particular value, this chapter has demonstrated the long-term impact that deprived childhoods could cause. The letters of former ragged school children evidence the ongoing health problems suffered in later years; at odds with the movement's transformation discourse, the sick were not always healed. The potentially detrimental effect of poverty was shown most starkly through the experiences of physically and mentally disabled children within impoverished communities. Ragged school documents provide a rare insight into the experiences of disabled children in the early and mid-nineteenth century, an especially fragmented and covert part of history. As such, the ragged school movement deserves acknowledgement within the wider history of disability. Physically and mentally disabled children were not excluded from ragged schools; rather, they were accommodated and identified as God's children.

Finally, this chapter has explored the multiple ways that ragged schools supported and assisted impoverished children. The *OCM* sought to engage with the children's trials, providing stories intended to assist readers in difficult periods. Teachers such as Ware could play a crucial role in detecting cases of particular need and supplying aid. The emotional

support he provided was valued by many scholars, as suggested by the innumerable cases of children confiding their concerns to Ware. The schools themselves acted as safe and stabilising sites for many children, providing an escape from the everyday worries that poverty brought. At the same time, ragged schools could prove difficult places. Despite the movement's intention to embrace all impoverished children, it was nevertheless possible for children to be cast as outsiders by their peers because of raggedness, dirtiness, or disability.





## Chapter 3

### “Having a Lark”: Children and Teachers in the Classroom

#### Introduction

William Weldon Champneys’s account of Henry Adams’s work as a ragged school teacher in Whitechapel touches on themes that are core concerns of this chapter. While Adams was teaching, one of his colleagues ‘rushed up to him’ and, gesturing to a ‘party of rough young men’, asked frantically “‘Oh look here Mr. Adams, shall I go for the police?’”. The boys in question were ‘marching with mock gravity down the room, evidently bent on “a lark”’. Champneys praised Adams’s quick response, writing ‘Instantly comprehending the case he said, “Come along, my lads, come along. We have been waiting for you a long time. Glad to see you at last”’.<sup>1</sup> Adams proceeded to arrange the newcomers in rows, ‘a little distance apart’, and gave them each a slate and pencil. Upon being instructed to write their names, the boys ‘recognised their defeat, and continued to the end of the evening doing just as he told them’.<sup>2</sup> Champneys’s description of this incident draws attention to the tangible tension that existed in many ragged school classrooms. The difficult atmosphere was likewise referenced in an article on Field Lane featured in the *Daily News* in 1850 that stated the institution harboured the ‘same air of social discomfort’ as a railway station, another new site where diverse individuals crossed paths.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter explores the relational dynamics of the ragged school classroom, looking

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<sup>1</sup> Champneys, ‘The Power of the Resurrection’, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

in particular at the interaction between scholars and teachers. As Adams's 'defeat' of the unruly boys demonstrates, relations could be challenging and adversarial. The classroom could prove strenuous territory as scholars and teachers vied not only to be heard, but also to direct proceedings. Further, this chapter argues that street-culture, whether slang language or popular songs, was brought into the classroom and used by scholars to belittle and undermine their teachers. The challenges teachers faced when engaging with strong-minded children is suggestive of the fragile nature of their authority, drawing attention to the teacher's vulnerability in the classroom. Those cases in which parents sought help with wayward children suggest the important role the institutions could play within communities. In focusing on the experiences of both parties, the relational foundation of the schools is underscored, moving beyond presumptions regarding the teacher's control and the scholar's obedience. Moreover, the complexity of relationships between scholars and teachers and the way they altered and adapted is shown through the expansive nature of the Compton Place sources that allow interaction to be charted over time.

More generally, the progressive education the movement aspired to is discussed. Because of the children's freedom to attend or avoid the institutions, teachers placed an emphasis on their scholars' enjoyment. It is shown that the children's responses to lessons acted as markers of success or failure, effectively positioning them as consumers the schools sought to please. Just as environmentalism held parents accountable for their children's development, the complementary Lockean theory of *tabula rasa* withheld blame from scholars. Teachers, like parents, were deemed culpable for the children's actions. Poor behaviour or lack of accomplishment was not attributed to the children's failings, but to their teacher's.

Previous scholarship on child-saving movements more generally focuses on the actions or attitudes of adults, whose effects on children tend to be presumed. This emphasis composes a picture of adult as agent and child as subject. Scholars including Swain and Hillel, Swain, and Mahood explore how child-saving groups both portrayed and acted upon poor families.<sup>4</sup> Mahood in particular frames the whole child-saving movement as ‘a massive intervention into private life’.<sup>5</sup> The reaction of children to intervention, not to mention to those individuals entering their homes does not feature in the above scholarship. This chapter contributes to scholarly debate by centring attention upon the children, looking in particular at their responses to ragged schools and their staff.

Goose and Honeyman’s recent edited collection on child labour is of particular relevance here. Of especial value in this context is their claim that:

Although children have hitherto been silent, and historians frequently refer to the need to ‘strain’ to hear their voices, in fact they can be clearly heard – both literally in protest, strikes, demonstrations and placards, and more figuratively in terms of direct action, including absconding, and breaking windows and machinery.<sup>6</sup>

Absence, interruptions, mockery, vandalism, and actual or threatened violence, may equally be interpreted as a means of protest in the ragged school classroom. It is less easy, however, to discern with conviction the motives or intentions underlying such behaviour. Further, Susan A. Miller’s observation that ‘casting children as resistant is part of an “agency dogma”’ and her recommendation that we ‘should be attentive to the ways in which children willingly

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<sup>4</sup> Swain and Hillel, pp. 10-11, p. 30, Swain, ‘Child Rescue: The Emigration of an Idea’, in *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives*, ed. by Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), pp. 101-120 (p. 105), Mahood, pp. 25-27.

<sup>5</sup> Mahood, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

conform' is useful when seeking to recognise the role children played in the classroom.<sup>7</sup> Rather than commencing on the premise that all children were opponents to the ragged school system, this chapter explores the myriad of ways that scholars responded.

In her essay on the moral instruction provided in late nineteenth-century English elementary schools, Susannah Wright examines the role that beliefs about urban poverty played in shaping moralistic teaching. At the close of her essay Wright concludes that the evidence she has used 'gives little agency or voice to the pupils themselves' and is unable to 'tell us what children thought about this aspect of their elementary schooling'.<sup>8</sup> This chapter builds on Wright's research by highlighting how ragged school children reacted to religious teaching, drawing particular attention to cases in which teachers were mocked by scholars. On a different note, Burnett has observed that 'It was not, of course, supposed or intended that children should enjoy their schooling'.<sup>9</sup> This statement may be applicable to many Victorian institutions; however, it does not reflect the ragged school movement. Because of the voluntary nature of the schools it was critical to their success that scholars not only attended but returned. To this end, lessons were devised to engage and excite scholars while rote learning and long addresses were condemned as ineffective. In reference to Sunday schools, Laqueur observes that they were built on the belief that 'worship should be fitted to the needs of the child, in contrast with earlier beliefs that 'children should adapt to adult forms of worship'.<sup>10</sup> This assessment is likewise applicable to both lessons and worship in

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<sup>7</sup> Susan A. Miller, 'Assent as Agency in the Early Years of Children of the American Revolution', *Journal for the History of Childhood and Youth*, 9:1 (Winter 2016), 48-65 (p.49).

<sup>8</sup> Susannah Wright, 'Moral Instruction, Urban Poverty and English Elementary Schools in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency 1750-1914*, ed. by Goose and Honeyman, pp. 277-295 (p. 294).

<sup>9</sup> Burnett, *Destiny obscure*, p. 169.

<sup>10</sup> Laqueur, p. 17.

ragged schools. This chapter adds to Laqueur's research, demonstrating how such ideals were implemented in practice.

Those documents that provide greatest access to scholar-teacher interactions are heavily drawn on in this chapter. When promotional literature is analysed in isolation, interaction between adults and children is removed from its relational setting and instead placed in a sanitised and theoretical context. Because of this, accounts of relationships between children and ragged school teachers in both promotional literature and local documents are used in conjunction. Newspaper reports from a national and local level, LRSU literature, and the writing of leading figures are woven into the analysis alongside committee minutes from local schools and extracts from Ware's journals. Compton Place material is especially useful in providing a window into relationships over time, rather than the solitary glimpses into exchanges that are found elsewhere. The longevity of Ware's journals enables relationships to be traced, in many instances from their inception. Further, the letters former scholars later sent to Ware provide rare access to their words and are touched on here before receiving greater attention in chapter five.

The education ragged schools offered is likewise assessed using both promotional and local sources. The *RSUM*, in particular its 'Teachers' Column', and advisory literature like that composed by Hall and Cornwallis is useful in establishing the educational ideals the movement professed, while the *OCM* gives insight into the material deemed appropriate for the children. Again, Ware's journals and documents from other schools prove helpful by allowing the aspirations of the core voice of the ragged school movement to be measured alongside the day to day experiences and frustrations of teachers.

This chapter opens by exploring the religious context of the schools, looking in

particular at the perceived threat that Catholicism posed as well as the opposition the institutions often faced from their immediate community, both adults and children. The response of children is then analysed more explicitly by investigating instances of protestation within the classroom. After this, confrontations between scholars and teachers are investigated, drawing particularly on a number of key cases that highlight the complexity of classroom dynamics. The notion of attachment between scholars and teachers is then explored as cases of positive relationships are focused on. Finally, the chapter moves on to analyse the teacher figure and educational practice that ragged school literature aspired to, comparing and contrasting this with the situation found in many classrooms.

### **‘The Worst Court in the Neighbourhood’: Poverty and Popery**

Ragged schools were established in poor localities, in ‘the very heart and core of all this vice and wickedness’.<sup>11</sup> Champneys advised readers that ‘To place schools at any distance from the children whom you wish to get into them’ would be as nonsensical as laying ‘a net at a distance from the places where the fish lie’.<sup>12</sup> The worse the neighbourhood, the more the school was needed. Many institutions regarded the hardships they faced as a badge of honour; in 1866, when celebrating its twenty-first year the founders of the Lamb and Flag ragged school stated with pride that it had been ‘born in one of poorest and most densely populated districts’.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in the pages of his journal Ware described a nearby neighbourhood as

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<sup>11</sup> G. Hall, p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> Champneys, ‘The Power of the Resurrection’, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> ‘A Flag of Distress; or, The Lamb and Flag and its Maturity in Difficulties’, *RSUM* (February 1866), p. 89.

‘the worst court in the neighbourhood’, before qualifying this in his tell-tale brackets ‘(except perhaps Compton Place)’.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, after the visit of a government inspector in 1850 Ware quoted their assessment that “‘Our Schools are without doubt the worst in London’”.<sup>15</sup> His sparing use of quotation elsewhere suggests that Ware regarded the inspector’s statement as notable.

The ragged school movement sought to bring the light of the Gospel to the hopeless inhabitants of the darkest urban areas. The crux of their mission was to go ‘boldly into the worst alleys of a great city with the Word of God’.<sup>16</sup> In early 1850 Mayhew critiqued the London schools in his *Morning Chronicle* column on the basis that their hope of civilising wild children through education was delusional. He wrote that ‘institutions like the Ragged Schools, which seek to reform our juvenile offenders merely by instructing them, cannot be attended with the desired results’.<sup>17</sup> When responding to Mayhew the LRSU asserted:

it was not merely with pens and primers they went down into the dark purlieus of misery and guilt, as if these could strike light into benighted minds [...] but they carried with them the Gospel – that only charter of human freedom – that only lever capable of elevating the morally depraved.<sup>18</sup>

Analogies of darkness and light were taken to greater spiritual levels in a *RSUM* article entitled ‘Exorcism in Westminster’, which announced that a ragged school in Devil’s Acre, a slum area in central London, would ‘dispossess the place of the devil’ in a ‘speedy reconquest of the whole territory’.<sup>19</sup> Such imagery of a holy struggle that was sanctioned by God was a

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<sup>14</sup> SHC 1585/1, 17 August 1851.

<sup>15</sup> SHC 1585/1, 1 July 1850.

<sup>16</sup> ‘London Ragged School Union’, *Daily News*, 14 February 1855.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Labour and the Poor, Letter XLIV’, *Morning Chronicle*, 25 March 1850, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Crime and its Causes*, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Exorcism in Westminster’, *RSUM* (January 1859), p. 15.



common component of ragged school discourse. It was used in Pike's 1884 history of the movement, composed as the former ragged school teacher and hero of the anti-slavery movement, General Charles Gordon, arrived at Khartoum, where he died the following year.<sup>20</sup> Thirty-one years earlier, when war in the Crimea seemed increasingly likely, the *RSUM* published an article entitled 'The War – but Not Against Russia', which opened with the statement 'Another attack has been made on the kingdom of Satan'.<sup>21</sup> The Crimean War was later referenced by Shaftesbury at a LRSU meeting in 1855, when he told those present that the movement was waging its own war, one against the 'powers of the Devil amidst our own teeming population'.<sup>22</sup> The 'powers of the Devil' were nowhere more prevalent than in urban rookeries and closes.

Fleeing famine in their homeland, destitute Irish migrants settled in the cheapest neighbourhoods and quickly formed Irish quarters. In Davin's words, particular 'London districts were continuously identifiable as Irish even though "the cast of characters changed constantly"'.<sup>23</sup> Compton Place's history was, according to an anonymous teacher, one of 'perpetual struggle & toil' with local residents. The 'struggle' faced at Compton Place was deemed a 'consequence of the peculiar character of the people', who were 'Irish & professedly Roman Catholics'.<sup>24</sup> In a society 'underpinned by Protestantism', Catholicism represented disorder and deviance as well as 'superstition' and 'ignorance'.<sup>25</sup> Given the interwoven nature

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<sup>20</sup> Brown notes that while in Gravesend Gordon 'embraced the work of Christian philanthropy, teaching deprived children in a ragged school and giving out charity and tracts'. Brown, p. 303.

<sup>21</sup> 'The War – but Not Against Russia', *RSUM* (June 1853), p. 133.

<sup>22</sup> 'London Ragged School Union', *Daily News*, 14 February 1855.

<sup>23</sup> Davin, p. 31. See also Brown pp. 183-184, Chadwick p. 272, David Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801-1921* (Dublin: Irish Economic and Social History Society, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> SHC 1585/7, anonymous letter, 18 June 1848.

<sup>25</sup> Heffer, p. 135.

of evangelicalism and anti-Catholicism that Chadwick describes, it is unsurprising that Roman Catholic priests were quickly identified as the movement's chief opponents.<sup>26</sup> In an article entitled 'Infidelity and Popery' that opened the 1851 January edition of the *RSUM*, readers were warned against 'the enemies of Gospel truth' and their 'aggressive footsteps'.<sup>27</sup> Notably, this warning to ragged school supporters was issued in the shadow of the Papal restoration in 1850 of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales. Perceived as an assault on the nation, upwards of 2,600 petitions with over 900,000 signatures against Catholic aggression were presented to Queen Victoria.<sup>28</sup> The *RSUM* article reminded its readers not to 'forget that one of the Scriptural characteristics of Popery is its secrecy; that it is "the mystery of iniquity;" and that infidelity, decked in the garb of a twin sister, is silently leavening the masses of the population with its destructive doctrines'.<sup>29</sup> As Brown observes, Protestantism was regarded as 'inextricably linked' with liberty. Catholicism, on the other hand, was deemed enslavement to 'superstition and priestcraft'.<sup>30</sup>

Ragged school literature depicted priests as corrupt and debased characters, who incited discontent among the poor. Local hostility was attributed to priestly influence in an article about Edward Mews school featured in the *RSUM* in 1849, which argued that the 'opposition experienced' was due to 'the Roman Catholic clergy in the neighbourhood'. According to the article, priests 'inflicted penances, and even excommunicated those of their flock who sent their children to school'.<sup>31</sup> Similar disdain was expressed by Guthrie, who

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<sup>26</sup> Chadwick, p. 440. Chadwick argues that evangelicalism and anti-Catholicism were closely connected and attributes the surge of Evangelicals within the Anglican Church to fears regarding papal aggression.

<sup>27</sup> 'Our Future Work – Infidelity and Popery', *RSUM* (January 1851), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, p. 183.

<sup>29</sup> 'Our Future Work – Infidelity and Popery', *RSUM* (January 1851), pp. 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, pp. 183-184.

<sup>31</sup> 'Edward Mews Ragged School', *RSUM* (May 1849), p. 98.

noted that no priest had previously expressed concern for the impoverished ‘nominal Roman Catholic’ children residing in Edinburgh’s Cowgate. Nevertheless, the city’s priests responded speedily to such children learning to read ‘God’s blessed Word’, rising ‘to rescue them from so great a danger’.<sup>32</sup>

Local documents likewise reveal fears of priestly cunning; in May 1854 the Field Lane committee discussed the supposed plans of priests to hinder the institution. During the meeting a letter from Shaftesbury was read, which urged the committee to inhibit the ‘new efforts of the Roman Catholics near the school’. When discussing the action to be taken suggestions included hiring rooms beside Catholic buildings for Protestant preaching to be loudly practised and the ‘liberal distribution of Tracts’.<sup>33</sup> Ware expressed similar concerns in his journals, particularly in relation to children from Catholic families. When young Maurice Keane told Ware that a priest had taken his Protestant tracts, Ware prayerfully exclaimed in his journal ‘May God keep him from the errors of Popery & from all other evil!’ – a note that demonstrates the alarm Catholicism provoked in him.<sup>34</sup> Ware’s fears regarding the influence of local priests is more overt still in his entry on 26 July 1857, which opened with the exclamation: ‘I have discovered a “Popish Plot”’. He went on to explain that Simcox had been approached while working as a shoebblack by a priest with whom he was unacquainted, who tried to convince him to defect to the newly established Catholic Shoebblack Society. The same boy told Ware that his family’s priest ‘was angry’ that he attended the school and had called at his home to express his disapproval.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Guthrie, *Out of Harness*, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, 15 May 1854.

<sup>34</sup> SHC 1585/1, 6 October 1850.

<sup>35</sup> SHC 1585/5, 26 July 1857.

It was not only priests that objected to ragged schools and their workers, as many Irish Catholic communities were vocal in their opposition. Upon the establishment of Field Lane in 1841 40 of its 45 scholars were, ‘if they professed anything’, Roman Catholic.<sup>36</sup> In the school’s early days its founder, Mr Provan, was reportedly met with cries from local inhabitants of “Here he comes, curse the Protestant crew”.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Hall detailed the active protestation of residents who were ‘most unwilling to have the blessings that we desire to convey’, and others who ‘not only neglect, but repel, and even violently oppose our kindest and best intentions’.<sup>38</sup> The anonymous Compton Place teacher cited above noted that as local inhabitants deemed their work heretical, it had not been ‘received with compliance, much less with gratitude’; rather, it was ‘met with the most contemptuous & virulent opposition’. The discontent was initially exhibited in ‘acts of extreme violence’ from adults before manifesting in the ‘insubordination’ of scholars, supposedly encouraged by ‘both parents & priests’.<sup>39</sup>

Those children who refused to enter the schools often disrupted classes and assemblies with noise from the street. In Field Lane’s early years teachers ‘were subjected to every species of insult and annoyance’ and the building ‘continually beset by those whose only object was to create disturbance outside, or to gain admission for the same purpose into the school’. The disturbance caused was so great as to compel staff ‘to adjourn to a room on the first floor’.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, a letter featured in the *RSUM* in 1863 signed ‘A Worker’ told how the author’s school was frequently interrupted by the “cat-calls” and “drummings” of friends

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<sup>36</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 3 January 1844.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, ‘The Early Ragged Schools’, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> G. Hall, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> SHC 1585/7, anonymous letter, 18 June 1848.

<sup>40</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 3 January 1844.

outside'.<sup>41</sup> In accordance with this, in his criticisms of the schools Mayhew told how the institutions disturbed neighbourhoods as scholars entered buildings with much 'noise and ribaldry'.<sup>42</sup> This was certainly not denied by the LRSU. Shaftesbury dismissed Mayhew's exposé, arguing that the journalist 'only stated what everyone knows, that the children are rough and unruly, and often make noise in the streets'.<sup>43</sup>

Schools were not only besieged by noise, but also by airborne objects. Mud, vegetables, and stones were launched with intent both at walls and through windows. A report in the *Daily News* in 1850 detailed the items thrown at Field Lane school: 'stones, dirt, and every description of filth'. As a consequence 'almost every window was broken'.<sup>44</sup> The letter-writer known only as 'A Worker' referenced above described how mud was thrown into his own undisclosed school 'by the outside "roughs"', consisting 'of those who will not come to school at all, and others who come for a lark'.<sup>45</sup> The communal nature of disruption in St. Pancras is demonstrated in Ware's account of a staff prayer meeting in 1851. Ware described how the meeting in Brunswick Square was interrupted when cabbage stalks were thrown through the windows. He recorded that the group throwing the refuse consisted of '6 or 8 prostitutes & other women & some children with one or two men'.<sup>46</sup> This account highlights that men and women, as well as children, could be united in their resistance to the schools.

It is important to note that such behaviour could alter over time. The instances given above are overwhelmingly from the movement's early years. Many initially hostile and

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<sup>41</sup> 'Correspondence: How to Treat the Roughs', *RSUM* (January 1863), p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> 'Labour and the Poor, Letter XVIII', *Morning Chronicle*, 19 March 1850, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Crime and its Causes*, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>45</sup> 'Correspondence: How to Treat the Roughs', *RSUM* (January 1863), p. 20.

<sup>46</sup> SHC 1585/1, 15 August 1851.

suspicious parents came to trust their local ragged school teachers. Although the image of the cruel parent and the victimised child was a powerful and recognisable construct, it should not overshadow the equally valid narrative of the helpless parent and difficult child. Many parents petitioned the schools for assistance with challenging offspring. Following Mayhew's accusations in 1850 the LRSU gathered together 450 parents of ragged school scholars at various locations to ascertain their feelings towards the schools. In summarising the responses the LRSU described the 'gratitude expressed by these poor, and, in many instances, poverty-stricken mothers, often with tears in their eyes'.<sup>47</sup> Notably, Ross critiques such references to gratitude and argues that 'The image of the grateful mother had political dimensions', namely that it inferred the superiority of the middle class when caring for children.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, Ware's journals reveal the school's role in supporting single mothers. For instance, in 1851 Mrs East told Ware in reference to her son Fred that 'she could not manage him he was so wilful'.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Mrs Chapman confided the challenges she faced as a parent to Ware, and 'cried very much & said that in the last 8 weeks [her son] George had "quite changed"'.<sup>50</sup> It may equally be argued that in seeking help mothers did not demonstrate their inferiority to middle-class figures such as Ware. Rather, they actively sought assistance and made use of the aid available. Six years later, when Ware was again supporting Mrs Chapman who was then experiencing problems with her younger son, William, Ware closed the entry with the empathetic words 'Alas! poor Mrs Chapman'.<sup>51</sup> These entries demonstrate Ware's ability to

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<sup>47</sup> *Crime and its Causes*, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> Ross, p. 174.

<sup>49</sup> SHC 1585/1, 13 April 1851.

<sup>50</sup> SHC 1585/4, 20 May 1855.

<sup>51</sup> SHC 1585/6, 12 May 1861.

emotionally engage with mothers; he evidently listened to their trials as their words are related in his journals. Further, such examples infer that the children's difficult behaviour may not have been reserved for the ragged schools, but used in relation to authority more generally.

### **They 'Scared Mrs Ward Out of her Wits': Performance in the Classroom**

Those children who did enter the classrooms were by no means submissive. Interruption and disruption were common and occurred in a myriad of ways. The more conservative disturbances were those where children emphatically yawned or pointedly placed their head on their desk; one boy in Field Lane pulled his cap over his eyes and pretended to sleep, 'waking' comically at intervals to interject during lessons.<sup>52</sup> Others were 'most unruly', as 'ungovernable as wild horses' that 'could not be coerced'.<sup>53</sup> The *RSUM* used an especially illustrative comparison in relation to one boy, stating that 'There is a popular notion that the weasel can never be caught asleep; but I have a steady conviction that the boy to whom I allude never sleeps at all'.<sup>54</sup> They were boisterous and lively; the *Manchester Times and Gazette* described the children's 'great physical vivacity', with the author claiming that even the best behaved kept 'their limbs in incessant motion, as if bodily quietude were positively painful'.<sup>55</sup> In 1849 the *RSUM* described how the children made their presence known by 'bursting open the door, rushing up the crazy staircase, leaping on the forms, and overturning and breaking them – blowing out the lights, crashing the window glass, smashing the tables, and falling

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<sup>52</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>53</sup> 'The Ragged Schools', *Daily News* 21 February 1846, 'Ragged Schools of London', *British Mother's Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p.48, 'Westminster Ragged School', *The Times*, 24 April 1850, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> 'The Street Boy', *RSUM* (May 1868), p. 101.

<sup>55</sup> 'Ragged Schools', *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 4 September 1846.

pell-mell one over another – screaming, cursing and swearing’.<sup>56</sup> Twenty years later, the scholars at Gravel Lane ragged school entered in a similar fashion, ‘running up the stone stairs, shouting and stamping’.<sup>57</sup>

As a site where children congregated with peers it is unsurprising that the schools were often associated with play, or ‘having a lark’. When describing the challenges the institutions faced, the *Manchester Times and Gazette* cited ‘The greatest difficulty’ as the children’s ‘innate love of fun’.<sup>58</sup> In 1850 the *Daily News* reported of Field Lane’s earliest students that the ‘boys who did attend came only for fun’.<sup>59</sup> Ware often remarked on the children’s insubordinate behaviour, describing the class variously as ‘noisy’ or ‘unruly’. On both 8 and 15 December 1850 he labelled the children’s behaviour as ‘turbulent’.<sup>60</sup> Further, Ware believed that some boys ‘only come for a lark’, and in those cases he was disposed to ‘[turn] out a few’. He expressed his frustration with regards to one boy, writing that he ‘looks upon every thing as a lark – He seems to think it a lark to disturb the school’.<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy that Ware did not take the behaviour personally, but deemed it an unfortunate character trait of the boy. Despite this, there is no record of the scholar in question being permanently barred.

The very notion of a ragged school was regarded with derision by many of the children. One commentator told how the scholars were ““all in a state of frantic fun at the idea of any one schooling them””, while a critic writing in the *Northern Star and National Trades’*

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Thoughts on Ragged Schools, by Old Father Thames’, *RSUM* (November 1849), p. 205.

<sup>57</sup> ‘School Agent’s Work – West and South’, *RSUM* (July 1869), p. 156.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Ragged schools’, *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 4 September 1846.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>60</sup> SHC 1585/1, 8 December 1850, 15 December 1850.

<sup>61</sup> SHC 1585/2, 16 November 1851.



*Journal* described how an ‘ill-concealed chuckle “at the fun of everything”’ was detectable on the faces of those attending a ragged school treat event.<sup>62</sup> There were cases of teachers being openly mocked by their rowdy, and often especially sharp, scholars. While still inexperienced, one ragged school teacher asked his class if they knew what a spirit was with the intention of teaching them about the Holy Spirit. To the glee of his friends and the shock of his teacher, one boy responded bluntly “Gin, old son”.<sup>63</sup> An exchange likewise illustrative of a disrespectful attitude towards the Christian message was purported to have occurred at Field Lane. When the children were told “the Lord is looking upon you; he is there above you” one boy in the centre of the room ‘put on a most ludicrous expression of incredulity, and standing up, proceeded to scrutinise the ceiling with a mock-critical air’ and announced to his classmates “Blest if I see him”. According to the teacher, the boy’s remark gave ‘inexpressible delight’ to his fellow scholars, and was ‘doubtless considered a very satisfactory refutation of the argument’.<sup>64</sup> It is likely the *Manchester Times and Gazette* meant such encounters when it referenced children’s ‘interspersed of witty observations, which are often as true as they are original’.<sup>65</sup> These anecdotes not only demonstrate the scholars’ quick wit, but also reveal the freedom with which many children spoke in the classroom and the confidence they had when refuting their teacher’s lessons.

There were cases where children hijacked the attention of classmates from their teacher. One particularly surprising incident occurred at Compton Place when ‘5 or 6 youths

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<sup>62</sup> Untitled Article, *Derby Mercury*, 24 January 1849, p. 2, ‘Notes on Popular Movements, *Northern Star and National Trades’ Journal*, 9 December 1848, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (July 1877), p. 96.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 4 September 1846.

of 15 or 16 rushed in together & began with great violence of manner & vociferation to impersonate several characters in the tragedy of Macbeth'.<sup>66</sup> Whether or not such interruptions were originally intended to undermine teachers, they were often interpreted as such by adults. It is noteworthy that the Compton Place teacher who witnessed the children's Macbeth performance regarded it as 'proof that studied design pervaded their conduct'.<sup>67</sup> Guthrie's first encounter with the children demonstrates both the chaos of the Edinburgh school's early days and the communal nature of disruption. He recollected opening the door on a classroom full of 'ragamuffins' that were 'whooping, whistling, yelling, singing'.<sup>68</sup> The persistent nature of such behaviour is indicated in a letter published in the *RSUM*, which told how the scholars were 'giving ever and anon a specimen of their vocal talents, by a shouting chorus of some low and popular song'.<sup>69</sup> Singing in particular was a form of interruption involving multiple, if not all, children. The boys of Compton Place answered one teacher's questions 'in full chorus' by 'singing ballads or other street songs', while it was noted of Field Lane that 'Occasionally a shrill whistle, such as may be heard any night in the gallery of the theatre, or a popular song, is struck up'.<sup>70</sup> The fact that a 'shrill whistle' signalled to fellow classmates indicates that performances were coordinated. Again demonstrating the disregard some scholars had for the ragged school message, Mayhew referenced a police officer that testified to hearing Lambeth ragged school scholars 'when hymns were sung, sing something along with it quite different from a hymn'.<sup>71</sup> It is unlikely to be coincidental that ragged school

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<sup>66</sup> SHC 1585/7, anonymous letter, 18 June 1848.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Guthrie, *Out of Harness*, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> 'Correspondence', *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> SHC 1585/7, anonymous letter, 18 June 1848, 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>71</sup> 'Labour and the Poor, Letter XLV', *Morning Chronicle*, 29 March 1850.

sources do not reference the song lyrics, as it is clear they were deemed immoral.

As has already been seen, classes were often disrupted by behaviour associated with street-culture. Obscene songs, cursing, smoking, and drinking were undoubtedly regarded as antithetical to childhood by ragged school workers. Attendance at theatres and penny gaffs in particular was condemned in the movement's literature, in line with broader evangelical principles.<sup>72</sup> Street theatres were blamed for fostering troublesome conduct; in 1849 the *RSUM* referenced the impact of penny gaffs and theatres, stating that bad behaviour could 'be traced to the lessons inculcated in these places of filth and abomination'.<sup>73</sup> Ragged school literature intended for children strongly discouraged them from attending theatres; in July 1867 the *OCM* told a haunting story of a girl who visited such venues and kept bad company. The young woman entered prostitution under the influence of acquaintances made at the theatre, causing her to eventually commit 'self-murder' by throwing herself from a bridge. At the close of the story young readers were asked 'We say that the body was found; but where, oh where was the soul?'.<sup>74</sup> Reflecting the references to theatres in ragged school literature, Ware's journals demonstrate he and his co-workers were likewise worried about their effect. On 6 March 1851 Ware and a Mr Robinson visited the 'Exhibition' theatre at King's Cross to investigate what children were being exposed to. He noted that the performance 'consisted of blackguard songs by a man & a girl about 10 or 12 years old', adding that he was 'thankful to say I saw no boy that I know'. He ended the entry by concluding 'It must be a dreadfully demoralising place'.<sup>75</sup> The schools not only discouraged classroom theatrics because of its

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<sup>72</sup> See Bebbington, pp. 129-132.

<sup>73</sup> 'Scenes and Sights in London No. III', *RSUM* (November 1849), p. 203.

<sup>74</sup> 'Mary Smith', *OCM* (July 1867), p. 100.

<sup>75</sup> SHC 1585/1, 6 March 1851.

roots in street-culture and the associated immorality, but because it was employed to challenge and undermine teachers. The popular disruption street-songs caused in the classroom was especially effective, allowing scholars to join in unison singing lyrics unknown, and likely offensive, to their teacher. By substituting the words of hymns with those of their own invention, the Lambeth scholars mentioned above simultaneously cast their teacher as an outsider in their own classroom while also disparaging the ragged school message. A particularly striking example of street scenes being enacted in the classroom took place in Ward's Place school. According to a report featured in the *RSUM*, one boy took it upon himself 'to enliven what he might deem an interlude in the teaching, with a stentorian cry of "clean your boots;" while a comrade, not far off, perhaps thinking a variation in the performance desirable, would chime in with "ten a penny walnuts"'.<sup>76</sup> Examples such as this show that the children introduced the language from their daily lives into the classroom, whether welcome to do so or not.

It was not only the children's voices that interrupted teaching, as many sought more exciting means of causing disruption. At Field Lane one boy set a book alight in class, while on another occasion scholars blocked the chimney so they had 'the satisfaction of seeing the teacher's bewilderment and the room filled with smoke'.<sup>77</sup> Just as those enacting Macbeth at Compton Place coordinated their performance, there were several cases of children attending school equipped to interject. The *British Mothers' Magazine* told how sometimes 'for a freak they brought powder, and fired it off, filling the place with smoke', while Field Lane reported that "The familiar "crack, crack"" of fireworks was frequently heard 'even on Sunday

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<sup>76</sup> 'Ward's Place, Lower Road Islington', *RSUM* (January 1859), p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

evening'.<sup>78</sup> Those setting off fireworks revelled in the havoc that ensued; Field Lane teachers described the 'delight of the pupils when the master crosses the room for the purpose of quelling an insurrection amidst the banging of crackers'.<sup>79</sup> Similar stories are found in Ware's journals, as when he noted in November 1853 that some of the boys nearly 'set the place on fire with a Catherine wheel yesterday'. Expanding on the event, Ware wrote that it had 'scared Mrs Ward out of her wits'.<sup>80</sup> Three years later the school was dramatically interrupted when a fire was discovered in the wash house. When the charred remnants of a firecracker were found upon wood shavings it was concluded to have been the cause. Young Charles King was named the prime suspect; when he appeared at the school in 1858 Ware had evidently not forgotten the incident as he described him as '(our old enemy who set the school on fire 2 years ago)'.<sup>81</sup> Such behaviour was undoubtedly entertaining to those involved. However, more than this, it was an assertion of the scholar's ability to direct the dynamics within the room. The throwing of objects, singing, and impromptu interruptions all undermined the teacher's authority.

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<sup>78</sup> 'Ragged Schools of London', *British Mother's Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p.48, 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>79</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>80</sup> SHC 1585/3, 6 November 1853.

<sup>81</sup> SHC 1585/4, 23 March 1856, SHC 1585/5, 6 December 1857. Five days after Ware noted the fire in his journal a small report was featured in the *Hull and Packet*, which detailed that 'The Brunswick square Ragged School had a narrow escape of being destroyed by fire on Sunday night, by some boys playing at fireworks'. 'Fire at a Ragged School', *Hull and Packet*, 28 March 1856.

## The Burdens of Mr Berrington: Classroom Confrontations

Difficult and disruptive behaviour was often a means of protest against perceived wrongs. Buildings were not only damaged through boredom or play, but were targeted in response to teachers' actions. One Field Lane teacher described seeing 'a boy look like a young demon when he is being turned out', and the same report told how those expelled from the classroom "“commenced throwing stones through the windows, and brickbats at the door”". The damage caused amounted to windows being "“broken, the staircase often covered with brickbats, and the door nearly knocked in pieces”".<sup>82</sup> Likewise, in December 1850, after writing that he 'kept out all but about 35' of the most amenable boys, Ware noted that although 'The order was pretty good within' those outside 'were very turbulent: and threw mud & crackers into the room'.<sup>83</sup> A week later he wrote that there was trouble 'again', and on this occasion he 'kept out all but about 38'. The children denied entry occupied themselves by 'throwing mud' in the windows.<sup>84</sup> These incidents demonstrate one of the ways that those sent from the classroom expressed their feelings towards their school, their teacher, and perhaps their peers also; however, whether these feelings were disinterest, frustration, or anger cannot be discerned for sure.

It was not only buildings that children assaulted. In line with *Punch's* depiction of street-children launching snowballs, many teachers had mud and stones directed at them. Champneys's claim that the children in one school ceased throwing snowballs to let their teacher pass was noteworthy because it was the exception rather than the rule.<sup>85</sup> A letter

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<sup>82</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>83</sup> SHC 1585/1, 8 December 1850.

<sup>84</sup> SHC 1585/1, 15 December 1850.

<sup>85</sup> Champneys, 'The Power of the Resurrection', p. 59.

signed ‘S. R. S.’ published in the *RSUM* in 1849 described how Field Lane teachers wore hats ‘for protection’ from the ‘rotten vegetables and animal refuse’ that flew through classroom windows.<sup>86</sup> Similar accounts pepper narratives of the schools; according to an account of the Spicer Street institution, children ‘pelted the master with stones’.<sup>87</sup> In January 1847 the *Daily News* told how ‘books, slates, mud, and stones [were] flung at the teacher’s head’ and another teacher was spat in the face in one unnamed school, while in the same month the *Observer* quoted a Bristol teacher describing the ‘most unmanageable’ boy in the school who ‘pelted me with mud in the streets’.<sup>88</sup> Ware himself was not immune to such behaviour, as he appears to have been a target himself on occasion. After standing guard outside the school in November 1855 he described how ‘a good deal of mud [was] thrown’, and in consequence ‘determined to have a Policeman next time’.<sup>89</sup> His decision to hand over his door duties to a police officer may indicate that the mud was directed at himself.

In both literature intended for potential teachers, as well as that for the public, ragged school teachers were frequently depicted as being at the mercy of their scholars. Potential teachers were instructed that, because of their wild nature, street-children ‘could not be coerced, but must be persuaded’.<sup>90</sup> In other words, teachers were reliant on the children’s cooperation. Accordingly, there were many reports of children refusing to follow instruction. An especially memorable example of insubordinate scholars taking control in the classroom was conveyed by Shaftesbury. He described how Joseph Payne entered a school unannounced

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<sup>86</sup> ‘Correspondence’, *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 55.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Intelligence: Spicer Street Ragged School, Spitalfields’, *RSUM* (February 1850), p. 55.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Advertisements & Notices’, *Daily News*, 11 January 1847, ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850, ‘Bristol Ragged School’, *Observer*, 25 January 1847, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> SHC 1585/4, 4 November 1855.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Westminster Ragged School’, *The Times*, 24 April 1850, p. 5.

to witness six scholars sitting on their prostrate superintendent's back singing 'Pop Goes the Weasel'.<sup>91</sup> In Edinburgh Guthrie described how an inexperienced teacher 'unfortunately closed his eyes' in prayer:

For a moment his reverent attitude, and the voice of prayer, seemed, like the voice of Jesus on the stormy waters, to produce a great calm. But by-and-by I heard a curious noise, and I shall not forget the sight which met my eyes on suddenly opening them; there – and behind them a crowd of grinning faces, red with efforts to suppress their laughter – stood two ragged urchins, each holding a flaming candle under my friend's nose, and I could not help thinking that there was a wicked cleverness in this.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps there were other incidents like this, as the *RSUM* later advised teachers to keep 'their eyes fixed on the scholars' during prayer.<sup>93</sup>

The teacher's vulnerability was further asserted by Shaftesbury in 1848, when he described the teacher's role as 'absolutely a service of danger'.<sup>94</sup> Comparable terminology was employed by the *British Mother's Magazine* the following year when it told how the opening of a school 'was often a curious scene' that was 'not free from danger'.<sup>95</sup> The effect of this language, like the war analogies explored earlier, sensationalised and elevated the teacher's role. Although sparsely reported, there were cases of violence against teachers. The Bristol teacher who described the school's most difficult scholar also told how the same child "has kicked my legs", though adding "(happily he has no shoes)".<sup>96</sup> The letter from 'A Worker' featured in the *RSUM* noted that 'within the last few days our Master has been assaulted' and

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<sup>91</sup> Seymour, p. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Guthrie, *Out of Harness*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>93</sup> 'Teachers' Column: Rules for a Sunday Night School', *RSUM* (November 1870), p.255.

<sup>94</sup> 'Ragged School Emigration', *Examiner*, 10 June 1848.

<sup>95</sup> 'Ragged Schools of London', *British Mother's Magazine*, 1 February 1849, p. 48.

<sup>96</sup> 'Bristol Ragged School', *Observer*, 25 January 1847, p. 3.



the school decided to press charges, as did Compton Place's Mr Berrington.<sup>97</sup> When an array of 'juvenile "roughs"' congregated outside Harrow Street ragged school and 'threatened to stone the master' they were, unsurprisingly, refused admission.<sup>98</sup> Two especially serious cases that occurred at Field Lane were detailed in the *Daily News*. In the first instance a boy 'got a knife and attempted to stab the superintendent' and was 'fortunately prevented', while in the second a boy 'brought a large knife' with the intention, 'as he said, of sticking his teacher with it'.<sup>99</sup> The *RSUM* likewise reported an incident from Field Lane, wherein a group of boys planned to attend the school for 'a lark', having determined that if a teacher intervened they would 'rip him up'. As one of these boys had previously attempted to 'stab the superintendent' the threat was deemed particularly serious.<sup>100</sup> Although the words of the boys were recorded in two of the examples above, it is noteworthy that none of the reports related the child's motivations. Despite the significance of these instances, such serious confrontations were not the norm. It is telling that one teacher had sufficient confidence in his scholars to recommend they provide a knife-cleaning service to their communities.<sup>101</sup>

The ragged school building was regularly construed as desired territory and fiercely defended by teachers or viciously fought for by children. According to the *Daily News* in 1850, Field Lane scholars successfully overpowered their teachers on one instance, extinguishing

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<sup>97</sup> 'Correspondence: How to Treat the Roughs', *RSUM* (January 1863), p. 20, SHC 1585/6, 23 August 1863.

<sup>98</sup> 'School Agent's Work – West and South', *RSUM* (July 1869), p. 156.

<sup>99</sup> 'Visits to the London Ragged Schools', *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>100</sup> 'Correspondence', *RSUM* (March 1849), p. 55. It is possible that the boy who previously attempted to 'stab the superintendent' is the same boy mentioned in the *Daily News* report quoted above, although this cannot be verified.

<sup>101</sup> 'Correspondence: Knife-Cleaning Brigade', *RSUM* (August 1865), p. 194. It does not seem likely that the 'Knife-Cleaning Brigade' was ever established, however the fact that it was both suggested by a teacher and featured in the *RSUM* demonstrates the faith many workers invested in the children.

the lamps, and holding ‘the place for a couple of hours’.<sup>102</sup> The institution’s committee minutes detailed how ‘On several occasions, the door of the house (which was none of the strongest) has been forced from its hinges, to obtain admittance’.<sup>103</sup> Just as they forcibly sought entry, many scholars did not wish to leave the building. In these cases, confrontations could escalate quickly. When boys began throwing slates at a Field Lane teacher he tried to expel the ‘ring leaders’, and in response ‘an attempt was made to throw a large black board at him’.<sup>104</sup> Whether the teacher in question managed to establish peace without aid from other staff is not recorded. Similar events occurred in other schools; Shaftesbury told how scholars in Agar Town school ‘absolutely barricaded the door’, while Ware described a ‘terrible evening’ in Compton Place when some particularly troublesome boys ‘forced their way in, and made a great hubbub till we got them out by degrees’.<sup>105</sup> Ware’s terminology here, ‘we got them out by degrees’, highlights the struggles teachers faced in either gaining or maintaining authority in the classroom. It was by no means guaranteed that the teachers would ‘win’ any confrontation, particularly during periods when schools were short of staff. It may be that Ware and his colleagues did not call for the police in such cases to avoid the arrests and criminal convictions that could have resulted.<sup>106</sup>

From Ware’s journals it appears that Mr Berrington was ridiculed by the Compton Place boys. Berrington complained to Ware of their tardiness and bad behaviour in his class,

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<sup>102</sup> ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>103</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 3 January 1844.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Visits to the London Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 12 April 1850.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Ragged School Emigration’, *Examiner*, 10 June 1848, SHC 1585/4, 28 October 1855.

<sup>106</sup> Pressing charges was uncommon in ragged schools; the cases cited above were unusual. Although police were asked to guard doors or attend the opening of schools, they were rarely contacted in relation to specific scholars. The letter from ‘A Worker’ urged other institutions to involve the police in disturbances in order to protect staff and discourage such behaviour, evidently because few schools did this.

and, although Ware does not elaborate, it appears such problems were more common under Berrington's supervision than his own. Further, Ware recorded that one boy's father 'seemed to think Berrington a goose and complained of his bad management', again inferring that Berrington had little control over the class.<sup>107</sup> On 6 January 1861 Ware noted having 'trouble with Tom Ramsay', adding that he and another boy 'knocked Mr Berrington's hat about' and refused to apologise, only doing so immediately prior to the class treat.<sup>108</sup> Two years later, as already briefly mentioned, Berrington summoned a boy to court charged with assaulting him.<sup>109</sup> It is noteworthy that in his seventeen years at the school Ware never recorded any incidents of violence towards himself.<sup>110</sup> The challenge Berrington faced when controlling the boys was further exemplified in May 1863 when Ware learned that he 'had beaten two of the boys very severely'. Given that corporal punishment was condemned by the leaders of the movement, it is unsurprising that Ware visited one of their mothers and 'pacified her'.<sup>111</sup> Following this incident Berrington left London 'for a few days holiday', possibly upon Ware's advice; Ware noted the following week that the time away 'seems to have done him good'.<sup>112</sup>

Such problems were not new to Ware at this point. Over a decade earlier Ware encountered similar difficulties with Mr Froome. In October 1851 he noted in his usual Sunday evening shorthand 'Full school & orderly', before adding 'except the first class which poor Mr Froome could not manage at all – We sadly want a new teacher for the class'.<sup>113</sup> Just

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<sup>107</sup> SHC 1585/6, 27 November 1864.

<sup>108</sup> SHC 1585/6, 6 January 1861.

<sup>109</sup> SHC 1585/6, 23 August 1863.

<sup>110</sup> Ware makes no reference to the boys harming, or threatening to harm, him. He does, however, mention cases in which he felt intimidated by parents.

<sup>111</sup> SHC 1585/6, 22 May 1863.

<sup>112</sup> SHC 1585/6, 24 May 1863, 31 May 1863.

<sup>113</sup> SHC 1585/2, 19 October 1851.

as Berrington maintained his position ten years later, Froome continued at the school with a different, more manageable class. Nevertheless, Froome's difficulty in controlling the scholars continued to pose problems. In August 1852 Ware recorded 'Good school but no one to teach the big boys but poor Froome'; in prefixing his colleague's name with 'poor' Ware sympathised with Froome's difficulties in the classroom. Immediately following this he remarked '— alas for teachers!', demonstrating his frustration at the school's staff shortage.<sup>114</sup> At the end of the month Ware was 'so ill with diarrhoea that I could not go to school', only hearing afterwards that 'Mr Ayton was also ill'. Because of this 'there was no one but Mr Froome at the school' and there was 'consequently trouble with the boys'.<sup>115</sup> In this statement Ware directly linked the boys' bad behaviour to Froome; the use of the word 'consequently' shifted blame from the boys to their teacher, whose failings in the classroom caused the 'trouble'.

Like Berrington, Froome also had difficulties with individual scholars. On 6 March 1853 Ware recorded that there was 'a great outbreak between Mr Froome & Double'.<sup>116</sup> It is worth referencing that Ware earlier described young William Double as 'a very crafty fellow' with 'a rough character'.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, Double eventually forged a positive connection with the school and Ware, if not with Froome. Nine years after the 'great outbreak' between himself and Froome, Double 'came with his wife to the treat'.<sup>118</sup> The former scholar maintained a relationship with Ware, evidenced in the fact that three years after attending the

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<sup>114</sup> SHC 1585/2, 8 August 1852.

<sup>115</sup> SHC 1585/2, 22 August 1852.

<sup>116</sup> SHC 1585/2, 6 March 1853.

<sup>117</sup> SHC 1585/2, 26 December 1852, SHC 1585/2, 7 December 1852.

<sup>118</sup> SHC 1585/6, 11 January 1861.

school treat with his wife Double spoke with Ware about the ‘sad troubles’ he and his wife had experienced.<sup>119</sup> In the same year as his difficulties with Double, Froome struggled to control Charles Restieaux, who was acting ‘very insolent’. It was left to Ware to resolve the situation; his journal details that he ‘was obliged to expel’ Restieaux. At the close of the same entry Ware exclaimed ‘How I wish I could get a good teacher for them’, again attributing the difficulties to Froome’s own manner with the scholars.<sup>120</sup> It was not until March 1854 that Ware determined action should be taken, as when describing the evening class he detailed ‘Elder boys rather troublesome – primarily in consequence of their great dislike of Mr Froome their teacher’. He then concluded ‘I must make some change in this particular at all risks’.<sup>121</sup> Ware’s journals make no further reference to Froome beyond the arrangements to replace him.

Controversies regarding management and discipline are likewise found in the records of other schools. The Bristol ragged school committee sought an explanation from the newly employed Mr Higginbotham as to why he resorted to corporal punishment, and it was then ‘carefully explained’ to him that ‘if used at all it would only be in extreme cases’.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, in Helensburgh school ‘there were complaints of harshness and severity towards the pupils on the part of the teachers’. The institution’s committee deemed ‘One or two’ of the cases worthy of further investigation and decided that if the complaints were ‘well grounded’ the staff in question would be ‘warned not to use such harshness in the future’.<sup>123</sup> Ware’s

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<sup>119</sup> Double informed Ware that his wife, whose name is unrecorded, had died of cancer. According to Double, his wife had been ‘so ill’ that she ‘tried to destroy herself’, after which Ware added the details grimly; ‘(cut her throat in two places with a razor)’. SHC 1585/6, 24 July 1864.

<sup>120</sup> SHC 1585/3, 11 December 1853.

<sup>121</sup> SHC 1585/3, 5 March 1854.

<sup>122</sup> BRO 21131/SC/StJAInd/M/I, 7 January 1859.

<sup>123</sup> GCA, CO4/6/5/1/1, 29 February 1860.

reluctance to dismiss either Berrington or Froome was not unusual. For the most part, teachers remained in their positions even when their conduct was frowned upon by the school's committee, as many institutions struggled to obtain or retain staff. In the case of Froome, it was only after repeated failings that he was dismissed. Sub-standard teachers were tolerated even when concerns about ability were expressed by the teacher themselves. When Mr Gardener attempted to resign from Field Lane on the basis that 'he was afraid he was not doing any good' his fellow teachers made 'earnest solicitations' for him to remain because the institution suffered from a severe shortage of male volunteers.<sup>124</sup> The *RSUM*'s aspirational figure of one teacher to '*every six or eight children*' was rarely achieved in schools; the annual meeting of the LRSU normally featured a desperate plea for more teachers.<sup>125</sup>

Ware's journals are especially useful as they offer the perspective of a superintendent. He made it plain on multiple occasions that he was deeply concerned about the school's staff shortage, and this undoubtedly influenced his decision to retain those who were not ideal. On 20 March 1853 Ware wrote 'I commenced a new system of teaching, having given up in despair the expectation of getting more teachers'.<sup>126</sup> His temporary solution was to take all of the boys together. It is worth noting that during this period teaching was becoming increasingly professionalised. According to Sanderson, the 1850s 'saw the rapid rise of the schoolteacher class'.<sup>127</sup> National teacher training colleges, established by Anglican dioceses to serve Church schools from 1839, rapidly multiplied thanks to considerable government aid.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 17 June 1845. I presume that 'Mr Garner' who appears elsewhere in the committee minutes is the same individual as 'Mr Gardener'.

<sup>125</sup> 'Plans and Progress: Practical Suggestions – The Work, and How to Do it', *RSUM* (February 1849), p. 32.

<sup>126</sup> SHC 1585/2, 20 March 1853.

<sup>127</sup> Sanderson, p. 23

<sup>128</sup> Stephens, p. 7.

Consequently, the number of qualified teachers in England increased from 681 in 1849 to 6878 in 1859.<sup>129</sup> As already noted, ragged schools were predominantly reliant on volunteer teachers; however, a small number of qualified paid teachers were employed (Appendix B: Figure 3). Weekend classes were usually presided over by volunteers, yet many schools found it necessary to employ a teacher during the week. Such teachers were sometimes sent to further their knowledge in the newly established training colleges mentioned above. For instance, the Field Lane committee minutes record that one of the school's paid teachers, Miss Hughes, was sent 'for a month or six weeks' to a training college in order to 'increase the efficiency' of the school.<sup>130</sup> It appears to have become increasingly difficult to retain qualified teachers within ragged schools; by 1858 the LRSU was employing 200 monitors, despite Carpenter's insistence that the pupil-teacher monitorial system was 'utterly inapplicable' to ragged schools.<sup>131</sup> It is likely that many paid teachers regarded their ragged school employment as temporary; less challenging and better paid posts were undoubtedly appealing.

Despite the shortage of available teachers – both paid and voluntary – there were nevertheless cases of teachers being reprimanded or dismissed because of their inability to control scholars. Although they have been tolerant with Mr Higginbotham, Bristol ragged school had little patience with Miss Griffin, who was warned in 1858 that she was failing to reach the school's standard.<sup>132</sup> Three years later, the committee minutes detailed that Mr

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<sup>129</sup> Sanderson, p. 23.

<sup>130</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/004, 7 August 1850.

<sup>131</sup> 'The Fourteenth Anniversary of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1858), p.107, Carpenter, *The Claims of Ragged Schools*, p. 7. Monitors were older scholars that had exhibited natural ability in reading and writing. They were paid a small sum in exchange for assisting teachers by keeping order and aiding in teaching.

<sup>132</sup> BRO 21131/SC/StJAIInd/M/I, 9 April 1858.

Barker conducted both the infant and evening schools with ‘doubtful success’ and was ‘incompetent’ in the role. Following the committee’s discussion, Barker was informed that his ‘services will not be required beyond the time of the next committee meeting’.<sup>133</sup> At Field Lane two female teachers were dismissed in February 1861 following an ‘unchristian exhibition of temper’.<sup>134</sup> It appears to vary between schools and cases as to whether a teacher’s incompetence resulted in dismissal.

Adults who resorted to corporal punishment in the heat of the moment were condemned for demonstrating poor control. Just as violence and impulsiveness in scholars was indicative of immoral influences, such behaviour in ragged school teachers was disturbing. Teachers were to be above such base responses, as made clear in the *RSUM*’s advice that ‘*the teacher be deemed incompetent who cannot govern his school without the frequent use of the rod*’.<sup>135</sup> Amidst 30 ‘hints’ regarding ragged schools the above advice was italicised to assert its importance. Corporal punishment was not only advised against because of its reflection upon the teacher; it was regarded as ineffective and unhelpful in the context of ragged scholars. To this effect, Shaftesbury told those at the 1847 LRSU annual meeting that the schools ‘cannot operate by intimidation’, while Hall wrote that ‘Those who only know how to scold and drive [...] had better not enter our Ragged Schools’.<sup>136</sup> The teacher’s authority was to be wielded with caution. Hall stressed this weighty responsibility when he wrote that the classroom was ‘essentially monarchical, and may be therefore either paternal or despotic, –either a great

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<sup>133</sup> BRO 21131/SC/StJAIInd/M/I, 9 May 1861, 6 June 1861.

<sup>134</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/006, 13 February 1861.

<sup>135</sup> ‘Plans and Progress: Hints to Parties Thinking about Establishing Industrial Schools for the Outcast and Destitute’, *RSUM* (July 1849), p. 128.

<sup>136</sup> *The Third Annual Report of the Ragged School Union, Established for the Support of Free Schools for the Destitute Poor of London and its Suburbs* (London: Ragged School Union, 1847), p. 6, G. Hall, p. 56.



blessing or a great curse'.<sup>137</sup> Guthrie spoke of the damage corporal punishment could cause when he advised potential teachers that:

these children are very much what you choose to make them. The soul of that ragged boy or girl is like a mirror. Frown upon it, and it frowns on you; look at it with suspicion, and it eyes you in the same manner. Lift your arm to strike, and there is an arm lifted against you. Turn your back, and it turns its back on you. Turn round and give it a smile, and it smiles again in return.<sup>138</sup>

Strikingly similar advice was given within the *RSUM*'s 'Teachers' Column', which instructed readers that "Love begets love." Anger and hate beget anger and hate'. Like Guthrie, the *RSUM* utilised the metaphor of the child as a mirror, stating 'when you have looked down coldly, perhaps with a frown, into the eyes of a child, have you not seen the reflection of your manner and expression in the mirror-like face of the little one?'.<sup>139</sup> By likening the child to a mirror, their behaviour was attributed, for better or worse, to their teacher. Such arguments drew upon the educational theory of *tabula rasa*; as children would inevitably reflect the behaviour they were exposed to, teachers were encouraged to foster a sense of love in the classroom, rather than fear.

The question of how teachers were to possess both influence in the classroom without resorting to physical punishment was regularly mulled over in the *RSUM*. It is telling that the chosen topic for the annual meeting of paid teachers in 1869 was 'The Teacher's Power in the School: How to Increase It Religiously and Secularly'.<sup>140</sup> The following year the *RSUM* published a series of 'Rules for a Sunday Night School'; six of the eight rules related to order and authority in the classroom. The first rule dictated that the teacher arrive early to

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<sup>137</sup> G. Hall, p. 47.

<sup>138</sup> *Platform Sayings, Anecdotes, and Stories*, p. 53.

<sup>139</sup> 'Teachers' Column: How to Win a Child's Heart', *RSUM* (February 1865), p. 43.

<sup>140</sup> 'Teachers' Column: Paid Teachers' Meeting', *RSUM* (December 1869), pp. 277-278.

ensure that ‘children may be settled in their places and quiet and order prevail’ by the time class commences, while the second advised that the teacher ‘consider themselves responsible for the good order of their respective classes’.<sup>141</sup> The teacher’s authority was regarded as a delicate attribute that should be carefully guarded. Shaftesbury told those at a LRSU meeting in 1858 how ‘a gentleman who went to teach in one of these schools shook one of the boys’, after which ‘the boy came behind him and pushed him down’. He concluded that ‘had he not preserved his dignity by assuming that he had accidentally fallen, the school would have been broken up’.<sup>142</sup> The tentative nature of the teacher’s authority was similarly indicated in the *RSUM*’s ‘Teachers’ Column’, which advised readers to know the limits of their authority; they were to ‘only command what can be performed, and then enforce obedience’.<sup>143</sup> Many schools lessened the pressure on teachers to exert authority by employing police officers to deter bad behaviour outside the building. As already referenced, Ware stationed a policeman at Compton Place to counteract mud-throwing, while Field Lane employed one ‘to keep guard on Friday evening & twice on Sunday’.<sup>144</sup> In one instance a police officer employed by a ragged school to ‘keep order’ went on to have good relationships with the scholars. He ‘undertook to teach the boys’ and gained ‘such popularity [...] that he was christened “King of the Peelers”’ by his class.<sup>145</sup>

Many teachers, like the “King of the Peelers”, appear to have won the respect of

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<sup>141</sup> ‘Teachers’ Column: Rules for a Sunday Night School’, *RSUM* (November 1870), p. 255.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Ragged School Emigration’, *Examiner*, 10 June 1848. It is interesting that Shaftesbury did not draw attention to the teacher’s use of force despite his dislike of corporal punishment evidenced elsewhere. It is possible he did not regard shaking the child in the same category as hitting. However, it may also be interpreted that he felt the boy’s response was expected given the teacher’s behaviour.

<sup>143</sup> ‘Teachers’ Column: The Paid Teachers’ Association’, *RSUM* (April 1856), p. 76.

<sup>144</sup> SHC 1585/4, 4 November 1855, LMA 4060/A/01/004, 18 August 1852.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Ragged School Emigration’, *Examiner*, 10 June 1848. ‘Peeler’ was slang for police officer after Sir Robert Peel.

their scholars. Shaftesbury described a young female teacher who taught ‘the wildest and most awful looking men you can imagine’. These seemingly rough scholars bowed to no authority, but listened to their teacher with rapt attention. Shaftesbury recalled that they were so protective of her that he feared for the safety of anyone who caused difficulties in her classroom.<sup>146</sup> Such boys could prove an asset when there was trouble. Cornwallis related the words of a teacher who described the pivotal role faithful scholars played in the classroom. When there was “open rebellion” in the early days of “B\_\_\_\_\_ street” school, it was only through some of the bigger boys being “on our side” that order was regained. In another instance “about seventy boys” entered the school and, “seeing no physical force capable of resisting them, at once put out the lights, and attempted to carry off every thing worth a penny [...] candlesticks, books, boys’ caps, &c.”. The teacher called on “the bigger boys, whom I knew something of, to defend the rights and property of the school”, setting “four of the best and stoutest round the book desk, which they defended like men”. In total, sixteen scholars came to their teacher’s aid and restored order.<sup>147</sup> In the circumstances described above, ragged school teachers and select scholars formed an allegiance against those bent on disruption. Accounts like these demonstrate that it was not only teachers who played the role of ‘rescuers’, rather they were sometimes the ones rescued by their young charges.

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<sup>146</sup> Montague, p. 117.

<sup>147</sup> Cornwallis, pp. 51-53.

## **“‘Why Don’t You Tell Me How Mrs Ward Is?’”: The Child’s Part**

The performative and communal nature of interruptions, embodied especially in the spontaneous rendition of Macbeth that occurred in Compton Place, shows that behaviour could be orchestrated with the purpose of causing disruption and entertaining fellow scholars. However, it is wrong to suggest that all interactions in the classroom were staged or that it was not possible to form genuine relationships. This conclusion does not reflect the lived experiences of many ragged scholars and their teachers. When the children’s difficult behaviour is looked at in isolation, they appear violently opposed to ragged school staff. Yet, as the account of the policeman who became the “King of the Peelers” indicates, children could forge amiable, if not affectionate, relationships with their teachers.

Burnett’s research on working-class childhoods found that ‘Happiness at school is recorded less frequently by autobiographers than unhappiness’. Moreover, he found that where memories were positive it was ‘usually associated with a kind and able teacher who develops a child’s imagination as well as affection’.<sup>148</sup> On a similar note, Priscilla Robertson has argued with regards to middle-class education that it ‘created lifelong devotion – attested to in hundreds of autobiographies – between children and their nurses’.<sup>149</sup> Ware’s own memoirs are relevant here as they demonstrate his affection for his childhood nurse, with his earliest memory being a trip ‘to Brighton with my Nurse’.<sup>150</sup> Ware’s nurse continued to feature in his life during his adult years; when touring Belgium and Germany in 1841 aged 23 he

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<sup>148</sup> Burnett, *Destiny Obscure*, p. 156.

<sup>149</sup> Priscilla Robertson, ‘Home as a Nest: Middle Class Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Europe’, in *The History of Childhood: The Untold Story of Child Abuse*, ed. by Lloyd de Mause (London: Bellew Publishing, 1991), pp. 407-431 (p.424).

<sup>150</sup> SHC 1484/106/1.

wrote to his elder brother, James, that if ‘Nurse’s nuptials’ had not yet taken place, ‘give her my kindest wishes for her future happiness’.<sup>151</sup> When responding to a letter from his mother after the ceremony, Ware wrote that her description of ‘Nurse’s Wedding was very interesting to us; and we both wished we could have been there to take leave of her’.<sup>152</sup> Further, when reflecting on his aunt’s death in his memoirs, Ware recalled how ‘My old nurse’ was buried in the same churchyard.<sup>153</sup> It is telling that upon his aunt’s death in 1875, when Ware was 56, he continued to remember his childhood nurse. From Ware’s memoirs, both in his references to his own nurse and his later experience when employing nurses for his children, it is evident he regarded the relationship between a child and their carer as significant.

In the lives of poor children, a ragged school teacher could play as important a role as a nurse or governess in a wealthy home. More than this, for some ragged scholars their teacher fulfilled the role of a parent, providing stability and continuity. Ragged school literature abounds with descriptions of the deep and meaningful connections between children and teachers. Young readers were told in the *OCM* that ‘The name of a good teacher is very dear to the memory of most children’, adding significantly that ‘It is next to that of a good parent or nurse’.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, Hall asserted the familial role the teacher played, writing ‘With what joys will they behold in him father, mother, and teacher, all joined in one!’.<sup>155</sup> Such descriptions of the children’s love for their teachers initially appear incompatible with the

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<sup>151</sup> SHC 1484/90/2, 24 July 1841.

<sup>152</sup> SHC 1484/90/4, 11 August 1841. Ware’s travelling companion was his brother Charles.

<sup>153</sup> SHC 1487/106/2. When describing his own children’s early years, Ware referenced the struggles he and Mary faced when seeking a good nurse. The family suffered a high staff turnover; it was evidently important to Ware to find ‘one whom we liked’. He described one nurse as ‘rather a silly girl’ who ‘seemed homesick and did not like the work’ and another who left ‘suddenly in a fit of temper’. SHC 1487/106/2-3.

<sup>154</sup> ‘The Dying Scholar’, *OCM* (October 1857), p. 145.

<sup>155</sup> G. Hall, p. 51.

accounts of their unmanageable behaviour explored above. Nevertheless, the existence of positive relationships between children and teachers is undeniable.

When documents from local schools are consulted it is clear that not all relationships between scholars and teachers were adversarial. The Field Lane casebook made several references to the ‘attachment’ of particular scholars to either the institution or its teachers. Maurice Connor, for instance, was ‘Much attached to those who gain his confidence’, while Harry Johnson became ‘Much attached to those who are kind to him’.<sup>156</sup> The same term was used in an article on the schools featured in the *Daily News*, which described the children’s great ‘attachment to their teachers’.<sup>157</sup> The notion of a child’s ‘attachment’ to school or teacher suggests both a child’s sense of belonging or emotional investment within school relationships. Ware undoubtedly believed that he was regarded with affection by certain scholars. After visiting Fred East, who was ill with a fever, Ware wrote that ‘He seemed pleased to see me’.<sup>158</sup> He visited again two days later with arrowroot, an easily digestible and nutrient-rich substance commonly given to infants and young children.<sup>159</sup> Similarly, when Charles Geary returned home after absconding with his wages Ware visited and noted afterwards that the boy seemed simultaneously ‘much ashamed of himself & much pleased at my calling’.<sup>160</sup> However, it is not necessary to rely on Ware’s interpretation. The previous chapter referenced Ware’s bedside vigil beside ill-fated Sucksmith. The boy’s own heartrending words to the hospital Matron, “‘If you will let me go to school this evening I

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<sup>156</sup> LMA CLC/225/MS05754A, Maurice Connor, Harry Johnson.

<sup>157</sup> ‘The Ragged Schools’, *Daily News*, 21 February 1846.

<sup>158</sup> SHC 1585/1, 10 June 1850.

<sup>159</sup> SHC 1585/1, 12 June 1850.

<sup>160</sup> SHC 1585/4, 9 June 1855.

will lie quiet all night””, is suggestive of his feelings towards the school, if not his teacher.<sup>161</sup>

Emigrants and former scholars more generally provide particularly compelling testimony of their relations to their old school. Visits from previous students, whether for ‘old-scholar’ events or because they were in the neighbourhood, show the ongoing connection between scholars and their schools. Where words are not preserved, the act of visiting an old school or former teacher hints at a desire to retain contact. For instance, it was mentioned during a meeting for the Union Mews ragged school in 1849 that many former scholars were ‘in the habit of coming long distances to visit the school’.<sup>162</sup> In 1866 the *RSUM* carried a feature on Spicer Street school, which told how two former scholars had recently visited, ‘one of whom left for the Cape of Good Hope eight years ago, and on his first Sunday evening in London he said “he could not help coming to see the old School where he had spent so many happy hours”’.<sup>163</sup> Likewise, when a former RSSBS boy visited Ware to collect his bank money, he ‘said “I might keep the rest for my kindness to him”’.<sup>164</sup>

One of the most frequent narratives found across ragged school discourse are the saccharine accounts of the dying teacher mourned by their heartbroken scholars. In his pamphlet on ‘Mary McD’ referenced above, Champneys described how on ‘a dark afternoon in the winter’ many ragged school teachers and ‘a large group of poor children’ stood around Mary’s grave as she was laid to rest.<sup>165</sup> Similarly, when Frank Lyons, a ragged school teacher who was formally a scholar himself, was ‘laid aside’ by sickness, his scholars visited him and

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<sup>161</sup> SHC 1585/1, 29 July 1851.

<sup>162</sup> ‘Union Mews Ragged School’, *Morning Post*, 12 December 1849, p. 2.

<sup>163</sup> ‘Spicer Street School – Visit of Old Scholars’, *RSUM* (May 1866), p. 109.

<sup>164</sup> SHC 1585/5, 6 May 1857.

<sup>165</sup> Champneys, “‘She Hath Done What She Could’”, pp. 18-19.

several 'subscribed to buy him a present to evince their kindly feeling toward him'.<sup>166</sup> In October 1857 the *OCM* explored how a teacher's death could impact on scholars and readers were told that the death of a teacher could be 'a great calamity to a school', and a loss 'not soon made up to the bereaved scholars'. An example of a dedicated teacher from Clare Market was cited, as readers were told that over the five months of her illness she taught her scholars from her bed while 'propped up on pillows'.<sup>167</sup> This case was also cited in the *RSUM* a month earlier and the teacher's name revealed as 'Miss C. Breese'.<sup>168</sup>

The Victorian affinity for sombre stories of death-bed conversions encourages scepticism around accounts of dying teachers. Nevertheless, the public display of mourning among poor children upon the death of both Guthrie and Shaftesbury is well documented. When Guthrie died in 1873 it was reported that his funeral was attended by over a thousand people, including '220 boys and girls of the Original Ragged Schools'.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, despite heavy rain, children from the refuges, homes, and societies associated with Shaftesbury lined the streets to observe his funeral procession in 1885.<sup>170</sup> The cynicism about the value scholars could place on their teachers is further abated by accounts from local schools. When Miss Good, a Compton Place teacher, fell 'dangerously ill' in March 1864 Ware exclaimed 'Alas! What a loss she will be to the school & neighbourhood!'.<sup>171</sup> The following week he noted her death in his journal. Ware appears to have been correct about the community's appreciation of Miss Good; over a year after her death a distressed family sought help from the school and

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<sup>166</sup> Thornton, p. 24.

<sup>167</sup> 'The Dying Scholar', *OCM* (October 1857), pp. 145-146.

<sup>168</sup> 'The Teachers' Column: The Departed Teacher', *RSUM* (September 1857), pp. 177-178.

<sup>169</sup> 'Funeral of Dr. Guthrie', *Dundee Courier & Argus*, 1 March 1873.

<sup>170</sup> 'Funeral of the Earl of Shaftesbury', *Standard*, 9 October 1885, p. 5.

<sup>171</sup> SHC 1585/7, 13 March 1864.



informed Ware that she had been ‘very kind to them’.<sup>172</sup>

It is not only the words of journalists and teachers that convey the mourning of ragged school scholars. In early 1858 Mrs Ward, who was previously ‘scared out of her wits’ by a firework, fell seriously ill. When Ware visited the Brian household on the 8 January, Mrs Brian confided in him that her son, Eugene, had been crying out in his sleep “‘How is Mrs Ward? Why don’t you tell me how Mrs Ward is?’”.<sup>173</sup> Young Brian was evidently distressed by Mrs Ward’s prolonged illness and the idea of her death. When she died in late February the Compton Place boys attended her funeral, after which Mr Weeks remarked to Ware that they ‘seemed much affected – especially Brian’.<sup>174</sup> It was not only Brian who mourned Mrs Ward. When Ware told one boy of her death prior to the funeral, Ware noted that ‘he cried’ and ‘has gone home to his father’.<sup>175</sup> Whether the boy’s return home was related to the news of Mrs Ward’s death is not made clear. Nevertheless, Ware’s account of the conversation certainly infers he responded with shock and sorrow.

### **‘Sound Shoes and a Good Umbrella’: Playing the Model Teacher**

Ragged school literature abounds with descriptions of the ideal teacher. The teacher’s character was of utmost importance; according to Hall it was ‘of immense consequence’.<sup>176</sup> The teacher was the linchpin that could rescue or ruin a school. As a result, the bar was set

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<sup>172</sup> SHC 1585/7, 17 December 1865.

<sup>173</sup> SHC 1585/5, 8 January 1858.

<sup>174</sup> SHC 1585/5, 24 February 1858.

<sup>175</sup> SHC 1585/5, 21 February 1858.

<sup>176</sup> G. Hall, p. 51.

uncompromisingly high across the movement's literature; the model teacher was 'a fountain of order and kind feeling, of intelligence and piety, of peace and joy to the community over which he presides'.<sup>177</sup> This lofty standard was deemed necessary because of the role's difficulty. A report featured in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* in 1849 described how 'The instruction of children for a long period, under the most favourable circumstances, was wearisome, but in the case of schools of this character there were difficulties of a peculiar character'.<sup>178</sup> After being both a ragged school boy and later a teacher himself, Montague wrote in concurrence with the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent's* report 55 years later that 'only the highest character, sustained by deepest faith, could endure' the position of ragged school teacher.<sup>179</sup> In one of Field Lane's many advertisements for volunteers, the public were asked 'Can any give themselves to the work as Teachers?'. Potential teachers were told that, in giving their time to the school, 'they will be entering on a work, glorious in itself and in its objects, and in its bearing on the character and prospects of those who engage in it'.<sup>180</sup> In underlining 'themselves' the Field Lane committee emphasised the level of commitment that was required, which was evidently found lacking in many. It is telling that when one gentleman was informed that his application for the role of teacher at Field Lane had been successful, he turned down the position 'on account of the work to be done'.<sup>181</sup>

It was advised that teachers possess 'zeal, patience, and persevering energy', as well as 'practical wisdom'.<sup>182</sup> The *RSUM* identified four points necessary in the model teacher.

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<sup>177</sup> G. Hall, p. 47.

<sup>178</sup> 'Ragged Schools', *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 24 February 1849, p. 3.

<sup>179</sup> Montague, p. 125.

<sup>180</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 3 January 1844.

<sup>181</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, March 1856.

<sup>182</sup> G. Hall, p. 14.

The first requirement, ‘prayer’, was followed by three distinctly practical qualities: ‘preparation, punctuality, and persistency’.<sup>183</sup> Punctuality was a recurring theme in accounts of the model teacher. It was praised in the *RSUM*’s declaration in 1868 that the teacher ‘is never behind’, ‘You shall not find him slothful’.<sup>184</sup> The following year the publication gave a memorable description of ‘A Model Superintendent’, which told how ‘Regularly and with punctuality has he persevered in the work’. His punctuality was ensured through preparation, as ‘He keeps sound shoes and a good umbrella’ so he ‘is not compelled to stay at home on rainy days’. Moreover, his well-ordered life overflowed into the school to create a system comparable with ‘well-oiled clockwork’, to the extent that you ‘can set your watch by his opening and dismissal’.<sup>185</sup> Although such practical qualities were evidently valued, a sincere and passionate faith was nevertheless the foundational marker of the ragged school teacher.

The Holy Spirit was deemed integral to the work and teachers were advised to call upon it to sustain and inspire them. Hall wrote that ragged school teachers ‘must drink plentifully of that spirit which filled the souls of the martyrs’, while the *RSUM* advised teachers to practice ‘a spirit of prayer – prayer in private as well as in the school-room’.<sup>186</sup> An article entitled ‘All for Jesus’, featured in the *RSUM*, gave an account of the model teacher’s journey to school. Even as he walked he sought God’s aid, ‘Praying, and meditating, and asking in all humility, for the blessed guidance of the Holy Spirit’.<sup>187</sup> Perhaps encouraged by the *RSUM*, schools regularly held prayer meetings to seek God’s blessing on their work. Ware

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<sup>183</sup> ‘The Photograph of a Model Teacher’, *RSUM* (February 1862), p. 25.

<sup>184</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Thoroughness’, *RSUM* (January 1868), p. 19.

<sup>185</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: A model superintendent’, *RSUM* (February 1869), p.43.

<sup>186</sup> G. Hall, p.132, ‘The Teachers’ Column: The Paid Teachers’ Association’, *RSUM*, p. 75.

<sup>187</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: All for Jesus: A Sketch’, *RSUM* (April 1869), p. 90.

often attended a meeting hosted by a neighbouring ragged school, noting upon its commencement in April 1850 that it had been ‘Very interesting’, adding ‘& I hope God’s blessing may follow it’.<sup>188</sup> As early as May 1843 the Field Lane committee agreed to increase the frequency of prayer meetings in order ‘to invoke the Divine blessing on our “labour of love”’.<sup>189</sup> Efforts at the school were again increased in 1860, seventeen years later, in the hope that there would be a ‘pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon both Teachers & Taught’.<sup>190</sup> On this note, the *RSUM* often featured reports on revivals, whether in the schools or in a broader context.<sup>191</sup>

Those pioneering the movement regarded it as part of a wider evangelical awakening wherein the people were no longer ‘delegating their duties to priests, ministers, or missionaries, but themselves going’.<sup>192</sup> The role of the ragged school teacher was regarded as a calling, not dissimilar to that into ministry. The notion of the role as a calling was explicitly conveyed in a poem by E. S. Craven Green featured in the *RSUM* in 1849 entitled ‘Unto This Work We Are Called’.<sup>193</sup> Potential volunteers were told that they would be ‘not merely teachers, but in the truest sense of the word missionaries’; they were home missionaries, called to share the Gospel with the nation’s heathens.<sup>194</sup> The idea of the work as calling was likewise demonstrated in the *RSUM*’s application of a sermon originally intended for curates to ragged

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<sup>188</sup> SHC 1585/1, 16 April 1850.

<sup>189</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 9 May 1843.

<sup>190</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/006, 18 January 1860.

<sup>191</sup> An example is found in the *RSUM* in July 1858. The article ‘Spiritual life and ragged schools’ gave an account of the ‘great spiritual awakening’ taking place in America before turning to the schools. The report claimed that the ‘quickening Spirit’ has been at work in the schools ‘in the thorough cleansing of young hearts once foul’. The author urged his audience to seek ‘more abundant manifestation of Divine influence’. ‘Spiritual Life and Ragged Schools’, *RSUM* (July 1858), pp. 121-124.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Spiritual Life and Ragged Schools’, *RSUM* (November 1859), p. 217.

<sup>193</sup> ‘Poetry: Unto This Work We Are Called’, *RSUM* (May 1849), p. 92.

<sup>194</sup> G. Hall, p. 57.

school teachers. The editor stated in the introductory note that ‘By substituting the word “teacher” for that of “minister,” the following will apply to every Ragged School worker’.<sup>195</sup> The association between the ragged school teacher and members of the clergy was further suggested in 1849 when the role was described as a ‘practice well worth the attention of those who are preparing for the work of the Christian ministry’.<sup>196</sup> By classifying the role of teacher as a calling, the movement endowed both volunteer and paid teachers with the same status as clergy, preachers, and overseas missionaries. For many, and particularly the many women involved, such authority and recognition was a striking novelty that undoubtedly fostered a strong allegiance to as well as passion for the movement.

The movement provided individuals with meaning and a sense of belonging; when Payne missed the LRSU’s annual meeting in 1866 he told those present the following year “‘You know I was away last year, and I was miserable ever afterwards’”.<sup>197</sup> Guthrie’s passion for the work is similarly evident in his article *The Poor and How to Help Them*, in which he wrote:

many a time have I thought, – when I wandered from morn to noon, and noon to night, until my limbs were weary and my heart well-nigh broken; and on coming home to my house, after the scenes of misery I had witnessed, I would almost sicken at the sight of the comforts at my own table.<sup>198</sup>

Both Ware’s and his wife’s memoirs reveal the significant friendships that he formed with fellow teachers at Compton Place. Mary Ware recorded her memoirs after her husband’s death and noted with uncertainty that ‘Either Mr. Snape or Mr. Fordham were M’s best man’

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<sup>195</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: The Three R’s’, *RSUM* (November 1870), p. 256.

<sup>196</sup> ‘Some Suggestions as to the Education of the Poor in Ragged Schools’, *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 2 March 1849.

<sup>197</sup> Pike, p. 275.

<sup>198</sup> Guthrie, *The Poor and How to Help Them: An Address Delivered in London, in December, 1867* (London: Morgan and Chase, 1868 [?]), pp. 3-4.

at their wedding in 1867, both of whom had been long-serving members of staff at the school.<sup>199</sup> When elected to the committee for the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1882, Ware documented that several ‘intimate friends’ were also on it. Among those on the committee were Fordham and Macgregor, who established the RSSBS with Ware.<sup>200</sup> After Fordham’s death three years later, Ware described how he ‘felt his loss very much having known him about 37 years’. The depth of their lengthy relationship is further indicated in the fact that Ware was appointed an executor of Fordham’s estate.<sup>201</sup> Perhaps staff were brought closer together by the demanding nature of the role, while the shortage of volunteers ensured teachers worked closely with their long-term colleagues.

As already mentioned with regards to control in the classroom, many teachers did not fit the ragged school ideal. Although Field Lane was publicly upheld as ‘one of the best and most efficiently conducted efforts connected with the Ragged School Union’, its committee minutes reveal the tumultuous staffing situation the institution weathered.<sup>202</sup> Field Lane had its fair share of poorly committed teachers; in June 1845, after Mr Gale was absent for several weeks, it was discovered he had left the area without contacting the school.<sup>203</sup> Six years later another teacher was reprimanded on account of their persistent tardiness.<sup>204</sup> Other less than ideal teachers avoided detection for some time, in many cases because of a lack of supervision or accountability. One male teacher stole clothes from the women’s refuge which he ‘was wearing when spoken to’ by the secretary.<sup>205</sup> Two cases of embezzlement were detected at

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<sup>199</sup> SHC 1487/107/1, Mary Ware’s Memoirs, p. 44.

<sup>200</sup> SHC 1487/106/3.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Our Homeless Poor’, *RSUM* (February 1859), p. 21.

<sup>203</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 17 June 1845.

<sup>204</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/004, 13 August 1851.

<sup>205</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/007, 27 June 1865.

Field Lane, which, despite the institution's popularity, were successfully withheld from the media. The more scandalous case involved Mr Provan, a founding member of the institution. In November 1845 'various Teachers' accused Provan of being 'inconsistent & Unchristian' in his conduct.<sup>206</sup> Two months later, with Provan present, the committee discussed how money intended for the school that was given to him remained unaccounted for. On 10 February 1846 a letter from Provan was presented to the committee stating that he 'gave up all further connection with the School'.<sup>207</sup> It is noticeable in contrast with the usual language employed in the minutes that no thanks were noted for Provan's years of service.

Drunkenness was a problem at both Field Lane and Compton Place. In November 1853 the Field Lane night refuge master was dismissed after admitting that he carried out 'his duties under the influence of drink'.<sup>208</sup> Just two months later another teacher, Mr Brewer, was dismissed after delivering the monthly report to his fellow staff while 'in a state almost amounting to intoxication'.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, during a Compton Place committee meeting in December 1860 there was 'Great talk about Weeks drinking and beating his wife'.<sup>210</sup> Fourteen months later Ware recorded asking 'Mr Berrington today whether he had ever seen Weeks the worse for liquor. He confessed that he had several times & Mrs B had also [...] It shows itself generally in a wandering gaze & incoherent talk. He thinks he only takes ale – not spirits'.<sup>211</sup> In this case, Ware and two fellow members of staff spoke with Weeks regarding both his drinking and the treatment of his wife, instructing him that if there were further

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<sup>206</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 12 November 1845.

<sup>207</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/001, 10 February 1846.

<sup>208</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, 18 November 1853.

<sup>209</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, 11 January 1854.

<sup>210</sup> SHC 1585/6, 5 December 1860.

<sup>211</sup> SHC 1585/6, 27 April 1862.

incidents ‘we should recommend his dismissal’.<sup>212</sup> Drunkenness was not Weeks’s only downfall; Ware’s concerns about him are explored further in chapter four.

### **They ‘Come for a Lark’: Engaging the Audience**

Core to the ragged school philosophy was the notion that the children came of their own freewill rather than because of compulsion.<sup>213</sup> It was therefore important that the schools appealed to the children they were intended to reach. The school would succeed or fail according to its ability to attract scholars, as Hall identified in his assertion that ‘Much will depend, and ought to depend, on the attractions presented by the school itself’.<sup>214</sup> When describing the teacher, he wrote that ‘His manner and methods should be distinguished by so much vivacity and cheerfulness that school-hours become to the children the happiest portions of the day’, a statement distinctly at odds with Burnett’s observation about nineteenth-century education.<sup>215</sup> Many schools followed the example of Pounds, providing scholars with ‘a moderate supply of food’.<sup>216</sup> In Edinburgh, Guthrie declared the importance of feeding those who came to school without breakfast, writing ‘Food is “the plank which bridges the chasm that lies between them and instruction”’.<sup>217</sup> This sentiment was supported by the experiences of staff in the Sheffield ragged schools where ‘it was found to be necessary

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<sup>212</sup> SHC 1585/6, 18 May 1862.

<sup>213</sup> Following the 1857 Industrial Schools Act ‘criminal’ children could be committed by the order of a magistrate to attend an industrial school. As some ragged schools also qualified as industrial schools they often received such children. Nevertheless, the focus of ragged school pedagogical advice centred on those scholars attending voluntarily.

<sup>214</sup> G. Hall, p. 39.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>216</sup> ‘Ragged Schools – Emigration’, *Standard*, 7 June 1848.

<sup>217</sup> Guthrie, *The Poor and How to Help Them*, p. 19.



when it was known that a child was suffering from hunger, that a crust of bread, or something of the sort, should be given him; and this occurred most days'.<sup>218</sup> Those schools that did not supply regular meals provided treats at prize-giving events as well as over Easter and Christmas; roast dinners, plum puddings, assorted cakes, and hot-cross buns were indulged in on such occasions.

It was not just food that attracted children to the schools. As shown already, peer relationships formed an important part of school attendance as many professedly came “to have a lark”.<sup>219</sup> Ragged school documents often acknowledged that friendships were an important incentive that led children to attend the institution. Such relationships were regarded positively in an article in the *RSUM* in 1868, which stressed the significance of the communal aspect of the schools. When describing a dinner for the children, the *RSUM* stated that the schools ‘don’t command to silence – the buzz you hear is only “table talk” and will aid digestion’.<sup>220</sup> Mayhew’s *Morning Chronicle* articles in opposition to the schools stressed the dangers of scholars being morally contaminated by classmates, as ‘Children mixed up together must turn out either thieves or prostitutes’.<sup>221</sup> Yet, the schools themselves downplayed this danger. Instead, ragged school documents focused on the benefits to be reaped from establishing communities. Rather than discouraging the children from interacting with each other, they aimed to create schools where positive and lasting relationships could be formed.

Christmas meals, entertainment evenings, days out, and school reunions were intended to knit the community together and establish bonds both among scholars, and

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<sup>218</sup> ‘Ragged Schools’, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 24 February 1849, p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> Cornwallis, p. 52.

<sup>220</sup> ‘The Children’s Dinner Party’, *RSUM* (December 1868), p. 272.

<sup>221</sup> ‘Labour and the Poor, Letter XLIV’, *Morning Chronicle*, 25 March 1850.

between scholars and teachers. The value placed on continued contact with former scholars is evident in Field Lane's committee minutes, which record that a tea party was to be organised because of 'the irregularity of the visits of girls'.<sup>222</sup> On Good Friday in 1857 Ware wrote in his journal that he 'took Keeley, Perton, H & E Wicks, & Morley to the Crystal Palace', after which he noted 'They seemed to enjoy playing about in the Park more than the interior of the Palace'.<sup>223</sup> Although attending for the sole purpose of socialising was frowned upon, the schools nevertheless sought to utilise 'fun' and to create environments that the children wished to be in. Organised events like those to fairs, zoos, and parks provided settings in which children could play together. Moreover, they demonstrate that the significant role of peer relationships in forming welcoming environments and close communities was recognised.

Given the reluctance to use corporal punishment, teachers were advised to reward good behaviour. The *RSUM* described the benefits of rewards, saying:

they tend to stimulate to activity those who are sluggish; they engender mutual affection and confidence between the teacher and the taught, and they publicly discriminate between the good and the bad.<sup>224</sup>

The Helensburgh ragged school awarded those children that attended most regularly 'handsome volumes' for boys and 'print dresses' for girls, the appearance of which 'drew forth not a little emulation among the likely prize takers'.<sup>225</sup> The possibility of evoking the jealousy of peers may well have increased the desirability of prizes and intensified competition between children. On this note, the Field Lane committee minutes demonstrate the

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<sup>222</sup> LMA 4060/A/01, 15 December 1862.

<sup>223</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 April 1857.

<sup>224</sup> 'Rewards and Punishments to Ragged Scholars', *RSUM* (December 1857), p. 232.

<sup>225</sup> GCA CO4/6/5/1/1, 'Tenth Annual Report for 1861-1862'.

enthusiasm of one scholar to obtain a prize. A girl named Townsend was deemed ‘utterly unworthy’ of her prize when it was discovered that she forged her teacher’s signature.<sup>226</sup> The reward system was intended to encourage children to attend the school from desire rather than compulsion; the scholar’s enjoyment was an important consideration in the operation of the schools.

Ragged school literature stressed the necessity of understanding children in order to adequately teach them. Although street-children were deemed particularly inattentive and energetic, the movement acknowledged that children required different teaching methods to adults. In 1864 the *RSUM* instructed teachers to ‘study the character of childhood’. Teachers were to ‘know both their minds and the general theory of mental action and development’.<sup>227</sup> Five years earlier, Shaftesbury stated that ragged school teachers should have ‘an acquaintance with the human heart, and a thorough knowledge of the minds of those whom they had to teach’.<sup>228</sup> Teachers were informed that children learned more readily if lessons involved ‘seeing, hearing, handling, or experimenting of some kind’.<sup>229</sup> The appeal of illustrations and their ability to convey information was appreciated by the editors of the *OCM*, which frequently included large illustrations alongside stories. In 1852 young readers were told:

You have no doubt noticed that we have given many more pictures in this volume than in the last, and in other respects made improvements. We have done so not only to please and interest you, but that your knowledge and usefulness may be increased year by year.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/007, 13 May 1861.

<sup>227</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Attention; or, Principles Rather Than Rules’, *RSUM* (June 1864), p. 140.

<sup>228</sup> ‘The Earl of Shaftesbury on Ragged Schools’, *The Times*, 22 October 1859, p. 8.

<sup>229</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Attention; or, Principles Rather Than Rules’, *RSUM* (June 1864), p. 141.

<sup>230</sup> ‘Editor’s Note’, *OCM* (January 1852), p. iv.

Eight years later, the publication continued to place value on images, as when reviewing the magazine's content over the previous year it was found that it 'contained 50 pictures, 9 tunes, 24 pieces of poetry, 25 descriptions of animals, 10 papers on English history, and 60 lessons of many kinds'.<sup>231</sup> Likewise, Hall urged that images be used in the classroom, arguing:

In our own families we make constant use of pictures as an unfailing resource in the work of rudimentary instruction. Might we not use more freely, than we have yet done, picture-books, and collective pictorial teaching also, for the lower classes? Here we have one point at least in which children of every rank agree [...] They are all entertained and delighted with pictures; and if to that which pleases the eye we can add that which will open and furnish the mind, a good work will be gracefully done.

School trips were equally valued as an opportunity for the children's senses to be engaged. Guthrie's Edinburgh scholars enjoyed a trip to Biggar fair, where they sang for the public.<sup>232</sup> Both 'the countryside' and the Zoological gardens in Regent's Park were common destinations for London ragged school children. On 15 July 1851 Ware took 40 boys to the Zoological gardens after which he expressed his frustrations, writing 'We had some trouble in managing them. I do not much like it, as they get in other people's way'. After this he added 'it would do them much more good to give them a run in the country – but that is very expensive'.<sup>233</sup> Financial limitations could evidently present significant limitations on the activities possible. Five years after Ware commented on the expense of taking children to the country, 150 Field Lane scholars were granted free admission to the Zoological gardens and afterwards a cart 'was provided the children being too young to walk both ways'.<sup>234</sup>

Teachers were advised against subjecting children to long addresses and sermons. As

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<sup>231</sup> 'This Book's Little Speech', *OCM* (January 1860), p. 3.

<sup>232</sup> *Platform Sayings, Anecdotes, and Stories*, p. 74.

<sup>233</sup> SHC 1585/1, 15 July 1851.

<sup>234</sup> LMA 4060/A/01/005, July 1856.

moralistic and religious addresses were a key part of a ragged school education, it was deemed critical that they were done well. In an article entitled ‘Practical Suggestions’ the *RSUM* stressed the importance of sermons being delivered ‘by some one capable of addressing and interesting children’. The same article specified with particular emphasis that addresses ‘*should not last above ten or fifteen minutes*’.<sup>235</sup> The importance of succinctness was likewise expressed in the *RSUM*’s description of the model superintendent in 1869 that was referenced earlier, which noted that he gave short, effective addresses and, though he may sometimes make a mistake and allow ‘Mr. Windywordy to have his say’ he is ‘careful not to invite him again’.<sup>236</sup> The same edition of the magazine warned readers not to subject children to long speeches in a short article entitled ‘Mr Phonny’s Address as Reported by a Scholar’. The article, which is ambiguous as to whether it was based on actual events, related the comments of a ragged school child. When the school’s superintendent asked his scholars about the address that morning ‘Susie, a bright little girl of seven years’ replied “Pleathe, thir, he talked and he talked, and he thed ath how he loved uth, and he talked – and – and – we all thought he wath a-goin’ to thay thumthing, but he didn’t *thay nothing*”’. Readers were starkly reminded, “Those who undertake to address Ragged School children without having any thing to say may learn something from Susie’.<sup>237</sup> Susie’s frank evaluation of ‘Mr Phonny’s address’ was indicative of his failure when communicating with the children. The scholars’ enjoyment of and engagement with a lesson was a key indicator of its success.

In line with the *RSUM*’s advice and the warning provided by ‘Mr Phonny’s’

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<sup>235</sup> ‘Plans and Progress – Practical Suggestions: The Work, and How to Do it’, *RSUM* (February 1849), p. 33.

<sup>236</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: A Model Superintendent’, *RSUM* (February 1869), p. 43.

<sup>237</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Mr Phonny’s Address as Reported by a Scholar’, *RSUM* (February 1869), p. 43.

experience, Ware identified overly long addresses as a problem in Compton Place. In the early years of his superintendence he learned the importance of speaking concisely to scholars; in the opening pages of his first journal he wrote that the school had been particularly challenging not only because of ‘a lack of teachers’ but also as ‘I had kept them rather too long – and should have closed the reading before an address’.<sup>238</sup> This extract demonstrates that Ware critically reflected upon his own teaching practice and gauged its success according to the response of scholars. In later entries he critiqued the lengthy addresses of others. After taking his scholars to a religious service at another school in May 1858, Ware testified that it ‘lasted 1 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>’ which he judged ‘too long’.<sup>239</sup> Similarly, after Mr Baxter addressed the Compton Place children in March 1865 Ware noted that it had been ‘Good but much too long’.<sup>240</sup>

The speakers that connected best with the children were those who employed terminology their audience understood. In 1868, in an article entitled ‘Prayer in Ragged Schools’, the *RSUM* told readers that words should be suited to the ‘mental capacities’ of children. It critiqued those who offered prayers ‘that would be appropriate for a church-meeting’, but, as far as ragged school children were concerned, ‘might almost as well be offered in an unknown tongue’. The author advised that prayers should be spoken ‘as if it came *from* the children, and was offered *by* the children’; it was important that the children understood the words being offered to God in order that they could have some ownership over what was said.<sup>241</sup> Again, the importance of the children’s comprehension was stressed two years later when the *RSUM* instructed teachers to ‘explain the meaning’ and ‘see whether

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<sup>238</sup> SHC 1585/1, 17 February 1850.

<sup>239</sup> SHC 1585/5, 3 May 1858.

<sup>240</sup> SHC 1585/7, 19 March 1865.

<sup>241</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Prayer in Ragged Schools’, *RSUM* (January 1868), p.19.

they understand you' after reading Scripture.<sup>242</sup> Shaftesbury evidently applied such ideals to himself when speaking to the children; in an account of a RSSBS meeting *Punch* detailed how 'Lord Shaftesbury, as is his wont, addressed the boys in words of kindness and affection', exhorting them in 'plain, impressive speech'.<sup>243</sup>

Concerns about appropriate terminology were likewise expressed in literature for children. John Pelly, who composed *The Ragged School Hymn Book*, stated that he intended to write songs that were free 'from words [the children] could not understand'.<sup>244</sup> In February 1859 the *OCM* referenced criticism levelled against it the previous month by a supporter of the schools. In a letter to the editors the critic had observed "Some of your words are not simple enough, and some of the sentences are too long; if you use more simple words, and not so many in a sentence, you will be better liked, and more easily understood".<sup>245</sup> The editors notified readers that the advice would be used to improve the publication in the future. Three years later the *OCM* asserted the importance of adults choosing appropriate words when conversing with children. In the regular feature 'The Little Philosopher' the uncle told his nephew:

In my conversation with persons of your age I always try to be very plain, and to give them only such information as their minds can take in. It is of no use to tell boys things that will only make them stare.<sup>246</sup>

It is worth reflecting on why this was included in the *OCM* when it appears to be more suited to teachers. It is possible that the magazine's editors were urging children to ask questions or

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<sup>242</sup> 'The Teachers' Column: Rules for a Sunday Night School', *RSUM* (November 1870), p. 255.

<sup>243</sup> 'The Shoeblack Brigade', *Punch*, 21 February 1857, p. 80.

<sup>244</sup> John Pelly, *The Ragged School Hymn Book* (London: Snow, 1849), p. iiv.

<sup>245</sup> 'The Talking Book', *OCM* (February 1859), pp. 22-23.

<sup>246</sup> 'The Little Philosopher', *OCM* (January 1862), p. 11.

to draw attention to words and ideas they were unfamiliar with. This is a viable conclusion as ‘The Little Philosopher’ encouraged readers to be curious about the world, as indicated in the feature’s name. The *RSUM*’s ‘Teachers’ Column’ likewise advocated questions in the classroom. In April 1869 teachers were told ‘it is wise to encourage our scholars to think and to ask questions’. Readers were assured that even if questions led the discussion on a tangential route ‘no harm is done, and much good may be gained’.<sup>247</sup> In other words, although teachers were to lead the class they were discouraged from performing a monologue that was unresponsive to their audience. The teacher’s performance was to be audience-led and receptive to those needing assistance or further explanation. Participation was encouraged and teachers were advised to include the scholars in the lesson.

It was not only the length of an address, but also the manner of the speaker that was regarded as critical. The *RSUM*’s ‘Teachers’ Column’ lamented the prevalence of poor speakers, stating ‘A *dry*, tedious address – were it not, alas! a rather common thing – would strike one as a contradiction in terms’. Those guilty of such inadequate teaching methods were condemned with the scathing statement that ‘A rambling, slovenly, inconclusive “talkation” is a wanton waste of the precious Sabbath moments’.<sup>248</sup> A common complaint was that teachers lacked energy in the classroom; one such teacher was ridiculed in an article entitled ‘The Sleepy Teacher’ that featured in the *RSUM* in 1869. The teacher in question brought only ‘dulness, and vapidness, and indifference to his class’, and consequently his scholars were likewise sleepy and inattentive, as they had ‘caught the teacher’s disease’.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: My Experiences’, *RSUM* (April 1869), pp. 91-92.

<sup>248</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Collective Addresses’, *RSUM* (November 1869), p. 258.

<sup>249</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: The Sleepy Teacher’, *RSUM* (October 1869), p.236.



When Helensburgh was assessed by a government inspector in 1860 it was noted that although the teaching seemed effective on the whole, ‘If any defect existed it seemed to appear in a want of animation or energy on the part of the teacher’. It was then added that the teacher’s lethargic demeanour was ‘to some extent was participated in by the pupils’.<sup>250</sup> Just as disruptive behaviour was attributed to the teacher’s inability to control their scholars; disinterest was often blamed on the teacher’s lack of energy.

‘Liveliness and directness’ were upheld as valuable qualities, ‘essential to the effectiveness of an address’.<sup>251</sup> The teacher was to utilise what most interested their scholars; Hall advised that ‘Experience and study will enable him to find that aspect of every subject which is most to the taste, and most within the comprehension of their infant minds’.<sup>252</sup> Engaging the children in topics they may otherwise find uninteresting was a prized talent among ragged school teachers. According to Hall, teachers should possess the ability to ‘clothe even the commonest things with an interest that is not common’.<sup>253</sup> A teacher in the Hull ragged school evidently possessed this skill, as the *Hull Packet and East Riding Times* told how his lecture on steam engines was ‘so completely to the satisfaction of his audience as to provoke a spontaneous cheer’.<sup>254</sup> Payne, who regularly spoke at gatherings, was, in Shaftesbury’s words, continually surrounded by the ““roars of laughter from a number of the most wretched children””.<sup>255</sup> Humour was key to Payne’s method when speaking with children; the *RSUM* noted following a meeting in 1861 that he spoke to his audience of 331

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<sup>250</sup> GCA CO4/6/5/1/1, 29 February 1860.

<sup>251</sup> ‘The Teachers’ Column: Collective Addresses’, *RSUM* (November 1869), p. 258.

<sup>252</sup> G. Hall, p. 49.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>254</sup> ‘Hull Ragged School Lectures’, *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 18 February 1859.

<sup>255</sup> Pike, p. 262.

boys with his ‘usual humour, impressiveness, and instructiveness’.<sup>256</sup> Following Payne’s death, Shaftesbury described his unique ability to interact with the children, stating that “There are many proverbial sayings, such as “the hour and the man,” “the man in the right place,” and the like – all of them have a special applicability to our friend. The work was peculiar and the man was too’.<sup>257</sup>

Addresses were first and foremost evaluated according to their reception by ragged scholars; those who captivated their audience were regarded as accomplished teachers. Accordingly, Ware was keenly perceptive to the children’s responses during his own talks. On 7 July 1850 he wrote that the scholars were ‘not very attentive’ while three weeks later they were ‘very attentive to address’, the subject of which he added in brackets as ‘(Jonah)’.<sup>258</sup> It may be that he was making a note to return to Jonah if the scholars were disinterested in other topics. He reflected on the effectiveness of lessons in his journal entries, describing on 30 June 1850 that he read the class a story ‘as an experiment’. He deemed the venture a success and concluded that ‘they seemed attentive & interested’.<sup>259</sup> Ware’s journal entry on 2 November 1862 again demonstrates his sensitivity to the mood in the classroom as he recorded that he ‘did not give any address fearing a disturbance’.<sup>260</sup> This entry highlights that Ware responded to the children’s behaviour and the atmosphere in the classroom; scholars could influence his plans, causing them to be postponed or cancelled altogether.

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<sup>256</sup> ‘The Shoeblack Societies’ Winter Treat’, *RSUM* (March 1861), p. 65.

<sup>257</sup> ‘Joseph Payne’, *Ragged School Union Quarterly Record* (April 1876), p. 43.

<sup>258</sup> SHC 1585/1, 7 July 1850, SHC 1585/1, 21 July 1850.

<sup>259</sup> SHC 1585/1, 30 June 1850.

<sup>260</sup> SHC 1585/6, 2 November 1862.

## Conclusion

Ragged schools were both welcomed and rejected by communities. School buildings were subjected to barrages of mud, stones, and vegetables in their early days. Local school documents reveal that both adults and children were involved in such campaigns of disruption and testify to the endurance of teachers who faced daily abuse. In particular, this chapter has highlighted the tension that initially pervaded relationships between Irish Catholic communities and ragged schools. It has contributed to wider scholarship on nineteenth-century anti-Catholicism, by demonstrating not only the portrayal of Roman Catholic priests within ragged school literature but also the very real fear they could induce in teachers. At the same time, this chapter has explored the value communities could place on their ragged school. In contrast with scholars such as Mahood and Platt who have focused on child-savers as intervening agents, this chapter has demonstrated that parents sought out aid.<sup>261</sup> In focusing on Ware's conversations with troubled mothers, it has been shown that many approached him to seek assistance with their wayward sons.

The ragged school classroom could be difficult terrain. Interaction between scholars and teachers was rarely straightforward, as relationships and roles were negotiated through compromise and conflict. In focusing on classroom dynamics, this chapter has demonstrated the complexity of scholar-teacher interaction. It has drawn attention to the challenging nature of the ragged school teacher's role, demonstrating that the respect of scholars was hard-won and highly valued. As the children attended voluntarily a premium was placed on their

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<sup>261</sup> Mahood, Platt, *The Child Savers*.

enjoyment. Lessons and addresses were evaluated on the basis of the children's responses; they were consumers to be satisfied by their teachers. The educational theory of *tabula rasa* held teachers accountable for the conduct of their scholars and stressed that the conduct of teachers should be beyond refute. Further, in contrast with scholarly interpretations that cast child-savers as powerful actors, this chapter has shown that teachers could be vulnerable within their classrooms. Nevertheless, ragged school literature did not conceal the instances of assault and belittlement that are likewise found in the documents of local schools; rather, they utilised these cases to draw attention to the heroism and passion of their teachers and to obtain the admiration and sympathy of supporters.

Less publicised, however, were those cases in which staff did not live up to the ragged school model of the patient and self-controlled teacher. Despite its condemnation within ragged school philosophy, corporal punishment was resorted to by some. Instances of drunkenness and embezzlement in schools were likewise not discussed in ragged school literature. In consulting local documents, it is evident that schools differed in their responses to such cases. The challenges schools faced in obtaining and retaining teachers often played a significant role in determining whether they were dismissed. In providing the perspective of a ragged school superintendent, Ware's journals show his reluctance to dismiss the volunteer teachers he had little confidence in. Further, this chapter has explored how the movement fits within the broader history of education, highlighting that the concurrent professionalisation of teaching widened the scope of positions available for qualified teachers and likely lowered the appeal of ragged schools. At the same time, many ragged schools benefited from the emerging teacher training colleges by investing in furthering the expertise of their paid teachers.

In contrast with the well-known Victorian idiom, children were both seen and heard in the ragged school classroom. Street-culture, whether manifested in songs, theatrics, or disruptive shouts of “ten a penny walnuts”, was brought into school with the children. Such disturbances were not only employed to entertain peers, but to undermine teachers. Songs, especially those which substituted the words of hymns, enabled scholars to join in unison, casting the teacher as an outsider within their classroom. In addition to subverted hymns, the sceptical response of some scholars to the religious teaching they encountered in the ragged school demonstrates that children did not passively accept their teacher’s words. At the same time, scholars could prove valuable assistance in the classroom. Instances of conflict were not neatly divided between adults and children; cases of children assisting teachers in warding off those ransacking classrooms complicate the picture, demonstrating that the children cannot be dualistically deemed passive victims or aggressive rebels.

Significant and affectionate relationships could be formed in the classroom, as ragged school teachers could fulfil a stabilising role within the children’s lives. The accounts of amiable scholar-teacher relationships that abound in ragged school literature are corroborated by the Field Lane casebook, which describes several scholars as ‘attached’ to their teachers, as well as Ware’s observations of scholars’ attitudes towards him. Moreover, the many cases of children maintaining contact with teachers and institutions over letter and through visits further demonstrate the positive relationships formed. Of particular potency, the distress that the death of ragged school teachers caused children highlights the significant role that they could play in poor children’s lives.

## Chapter 4

### **‘But I like the boy’: Ware and the Compton Place boys**

#### **Introduction**

No other documents from Compton Place ragged school survive beyond those Ware preserved; his seven journals and the letters he received from scholars. Despite their primary function as school journals, the seven bound, marbled books allow unprecedented insight into their author’s mind. The opening page of five out of the seven journals read ‘Martin Ware Jr’, or ‘Martin Ware’, followed by his address, ‘51 Russell Square’. In each case Ware’s own details preceded the title of ‘Compton Place Free School Journal’. This small detail hints at Ware’s sense of ownership over the journals and suggests that they were kept at his home. The most concrete demonstration of their personal nature, however, is the fact that he took them with him when he left the school in July 1867. The journals bridged the separation between Ware’s public and private selves; although inherently associated with his position at the school, they were nevertheless maintained at his home, eventually making their way into the Ware family archive.

This chapter contends that Ware’s journals, as representatives of their author, are multifaceted. It argues that the journals are not simply day to day notes of happenings in the school, but a seventeen-year devotional narrative of Ware’s mission as a ragged school teacher. Through his journals Ware forged the story of Compton Place and its scholars, one which is marked by God’s favour as well as his faithfulness in times of hardship. In maintaining the journals Ware simultaneously forged an account of the school in which he played a core part. The journal pages were a site upon which Ware reflected on situations,

forming opinions as he formed words; their content echoes his responses and evidences Ware's examination of his own prejudices. The undrafted, immediate nature of entries makes it possible to witness ideas, concerns, and re-evaluations almost at the moment of their conception.

Ware's decision to keep the journals in his home and to take them upon leaving his position in 1867, is indicative of the fact that they transcended his public and private selves. Within their pages Ware's identities converge and he is simultaneously barrister, teacher, protector, and friend. As a barrister Ware composed thorough, well-researched entries, particularly in those instances in which he was constructing a case, either in defence or prosecution of scholars. Moreover, his meticulous organisation and tendency to assess credibility, both traits crucial to his profession, culminate in a rare account of the ragged school teacher's work that is unparalleled by documents preserved from other institutions. Although Ware's narrative is distinctive, peppered as it is with Greek and Latin and his dark, ironic humour, it nevertheless conveys the fragmented testimonies of Compton Place scholars. For the most part Ware paraphrased conversations; however, when he deemed them particularly significant he provided direct quotations. In quoting the boys Ware preserved the dialogue between teacher and scholar, while his musings on the credibility of particular children draws attention to the contentious and uncertain relationships that could exist. Finally, Ware's journals highlight the vulnerability of ragged school scholars and demonstrate the protective role teachers could play as well as the dangers they could likewise pose.

The complexity of texts like Ware's journals is emphasised by David Amigoni in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, where he observes that such documents play 'restlessly upon the boundaries between public print and private inscription, masculine and feminine, notability

and obscurity, the centre and the margin, conformity and dissidence, the collective and the individual, the formally polished and the chaotically inchoate'.<sup>1</sup> Martin Hewitt's reference to the 'persistent internal dialogue' in Samuel Bamford's diary draws attention to its many-sided content and is helpful when exploring the layered nature of Ware's journals.<sup>2</sup> Further, Amigoni's argument that diaries, letters, and autobiographies acted as 'a source of belonging and identification' is helpful here.<sup>3</sup> The role of writing in shaping the self is commented on by Martin Danahay, who argues that diaries and letters are spaces in which identities are formed.<sup>4</sup> According to Mary Besemeres and Maureen Perkins, through telling stories of ourselves we 'clarify where we begin and end', enabling us to 'relate to "otherness" out there'.<sup>5</sup> Drawing on this scholarship, this chapter argues that through maintaining the school journals Ware created, developed, and shaped his relationships with scholars. It contends that relationships were constructed within the journals' pages. It was in this space that Ware determined his responses to scholars; whether to believe their testimonies or, more practically, whether to admit them to the school dormitory or the RSSBS.

The notion of the diary as 'open and plotless' is critiqued by Hewitt, who challenges what he terms the 'conventional preoccupation with the dailiness of the diary' by identifying a 'personal narrative of sacrifice and betrayal' within Benjamin Robert Haydon's writing.<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning at this point that in Clark's brief reference to Ware's journals he

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<sup>1</sup> *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. by David Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate publishing, 2006), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Hewitt, 'Diary, Autobiography and the Practice of Life History', in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. by Amigoni, pp. 21-40 (p. 23).

<sup>3</sup> Amigoni, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Martin A. Danahay, 'Male Masochism: A Model of Victorian Identity Formation', in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. by Amigoni, pp. 87-104.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Besemeres and Maureen Perkins, 'Editorial', *Life Writing*, 1:1 (2004), vii-xii (p.viii).

<sup>6</sup> Hewitt, p. 21, pp. 30-31.



incorrectly argues that Ware makes ‘few references to his Redeemer, is unconcerned with the fate of his own soul’.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, this chapter demonstrates that Ware’s faith composed an overarching narrative, a constant amid changing circumstances and scholars. For Clark, Ware’s journal-keeping was, to use Hewitt’s words, ‘rooted in its dailiness’.<sup>8</sup> In overlooking the manifold function of Ware’s journals, Clark blinkers his conclusions, writing simply that the journals show the ‘face of the devoted worker’.<sup>9</sup> For Clark, Ware’s journals present only the ‘silent evidence’ of ‘bulky notebooks’.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as a reflection of Ware himself, this chapter highlights the multi-layered nature of the journals. By no means silent, they represent dialogue, not only between Ware and scholars but, to repeat Hewitt’s helpful phrase, Ware’s ‘persistent internal dialogue’ also.<sup>11</sup>

It is impossible to remove Ware’s voice from his journals as his judgements of scholars and situations frame the entries. This chapter embraces Ware’s narrative, rather than seeking to escape it. The opening section focuses on the journals themselves, exploring what Ware’s writing practice, crossings-out, and marginal notes contribute to the analysis. This section lays the foundation for a close study of the journals and their content, which explores what may be gleaned of Ware’s evolving opinions and interaction with scholars, as well as the experiences and feelings of the scholars themselves.

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<sup>7</sup> Clark, ‘The Ragged School Union’, p. 290.

<sup>8</sup> Hewitt, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, ‘The Ragged School Union’, p.290.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Hewitt, p. 23.

## **‘I Forgot to Mention’: The Journals, Their Audience, and Their Author**

In the first week of his first preserved journal, between the 5 and 10 February 1850, Ware made five separate entries. On Tuesday 5 February he detailed a visit to witness two scholars, ‘W. Sandy & G. Page’, being tried at Clerkenwell for stealing. He recorded that the pair received ‘3 months with hard labour’, writing in the margin, seemingly with a different pen or at a different time, ‘G. Page and Sandy’.<sup>12</sup> The following day, 6 February, he recorded attending a teachers’ meeting where appropriate school books were discussed. On Friday 8 February Ware described how Mr Robins, a teaching colleague, asked for a map of England and Wales to assist in teaching geography, estimating a cost of 15/. After Robins was informed the school couldn’t afford it he ‘procured one at his own expense’. Ware scribbled in the margin at a later date ‘We paid for it eventually’.<sup>13</sup> He then spent his Saturday making arrangements for one especially promising boy, ‘Mingard’, to emigrate to Australia. On the Sunday evening Ware wrote ‘Good school & attendance to the address’, although he added ‘Bible class not very satisfactory’. As part of this entry he noted speaking with scholars ‘about observing Sabbath & asked how many had been to a place of worship’. He noted their response, evidently finding it shocking, writing ‘– only 4 or 5 held up their hands out of about 70’; Ware’s use of a dash prior to the figures conveys the sense that this was significant.<sup>14</sup>

The entries for this first week, although unremarkable in content, reveal a surprising amount about both Ware’s writing practice and his work at the school. Despite his duties as a barrister it is clear he was heavily involved at Compton Place, with afternoons and evenings

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<sup>12</sup> SHC 1585/1, 5 February 1850.

<sup>13</sup> SHC 1585/1, 8 February 1850.

<sup>14</sup> SHC 1585/1, 10 February 1850.

being employed for school errands and meetings. In underlining significant details, such as Page and Sandy's sentences and the fact Robins paid for the map, the journal's function as a means of record-keeping is demonstrated. The margins are especially telling with regards to the information Ware deemed important, as marginal notes acted as signposts to those entries he may later wish to return to. His practice of writing names or addresses in this space indicates that the journals were a means of preserving information. It was suggested above that Ware's note of 'G. Page & Sandy' in the margin was added in a different pen, indicating Ware added it at a later time. This idea is supported by those entries he edited in pencil, a case of which is found on 29 May 1864. Despite originally describing Mrs Henley as a widow Ware later corrected the entry, writing in pencil above 'No – husband transported'.<sup>15</sup> His practice of returning, not only to older entries but older journals, is most prominent in those that cross-reference associated incidents. An example is found on 3 February 1867 where he wrote that 'James Sheridan formerly known to me as James Hill' had 'came to call on me'. In the body of the entry, composed in pen, Ware specified 'The last I heard from him was in 18\_\_', only to later return and add tentatively in pencil within the carefully left gap '58'. Within the margin adjacent to the entry Ware listed 'See entries for 1853, 1856, 1857, 1858', adding also 'May 1858' specifically.<sup>16</sup> Ware was correct; May 1858 was indeed the last time 'James Hill' was mentioned before his visit nine years later. This entry in particular demonstrates Ware's extensive knowledge of his journals, as well as the time he invested in their upkeep.

It may be speculated that Ware dedicated such a wealth of time to cross-referencing and editing because he recognised the historical significance of the school. Certainly by the

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<sup>15</sup> SHC 1585/7, 29 May 1864.

<sup>16</sup> SHC 1585/7, 9 February 1867.

time he composed his memoirs he felt that Compton Place had been ‘the means of doing a great deal of good in that neighbourhood’.<sup>17</sup> Although composed decades later, Ware’s memoirs exhibit his awareness of preserving information for later generations. In particular, by instructing the reader, as seen earlier, that ‘It must be remembered that at this time the destitute poor were very much neglected’, Ware stressed the important impact of the ragged school movement.<sup>18</sup> Composing his memoirs was not solely a writing project to occupy his time later in life; he did on some level imagine that they would be read. Similarly, the lengths Ware went to in cross-referencing information in his journals suggest he believed the journals may also be read.

The question of who Ware imagined reading his journal is more evasive. Unlike committee minute books, it does not appear Ware’s journal was attached to his position at the school. There is no indication he read from or referred to it during committee meetings; rather, his references to such meetings are often limited to short sentences, i.e. ‘Obtained permission to establish a Clothes fund – & I shall set about it at once’.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, there is little suggestion he expected anyone from the LRSU to check his records; the proclamation from the LRSU in 1847 that it would not interfere with the ‘internal management’ of schools further supports this.<sup>20</sup> On the whole it appears that Ware generally wrote with little regard for prying eyes, in contrast to the journal maintained by the Field Lane beadle, which contains unmistakable indicators of being subject to higher authority.<sup>21</sup> Hewitt’s research on

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<sup>17</sup> SHC 1487/106/1.

<sup>18</sup> SHC 1487/106/1.

<sup>19</sup> SHC 1585/1, 9 March 1850.

<sup>20</sup> *The Third Annual Report of the Ragged School Union* (London: Ragged School Union, 1847) p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> LMA 4060/E/01/002.

Victorian diaries is helpful here as he highlights the uncertainty that surrounded the notion of the diary as confidential, arguing that authors were likely to be ‘fully aware of the ambiguous status of the diary’s claim to privacy’.<sup>22</sup> Hewitt has found that it ‘was quite normal for diarists to censor their texts, sometimes engaging in wholesale mutilation and destruction of the manuscript’.<sup>23</sup> Tellingly, Ware’s entry on 31 January 1864 shows signs of censorship not found elsewhere. When a boy reported to Ware that other children had accused a leader from the Brown Shoeblack Society of ‘taking indecent liberties’ with them, Ware noted the accused’s name as ‘Mr E. F. T’. Later in the entry Ware appears to have mistakenly written the accused’s name. It is not merely crossed out in his normal practice, but thoroughly obscured and replaced with the ambiguous ‘Mr T.’ (Appendix A, Figure 9). Although similar reports occur at other times, no such concealment occurred. It is possible Ware questioned the authenticity of the accusations in this instance and consequently wished to protect the individual’s identity. Whatever the case, this example demonstrates that Ware did not always take privacy for granted.

It is possible Ware’s journal-keeping was a product of his personal habits of meticulous order, perhaps instilled in him by his legal training. The writing process arguably provided a space for him to process the week’s events and link together associated incidents. Certainly, the letters he sent home during his travels reveal that writing was a crucial part of his week. For instance, when writing to his father from Dublin Ware’s opening sentence read ‘I have not much more to tell you than I had yesterday, but I do not like Sunday to pass

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<sup>22</sup> Hewitt, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

without sending you a line'.<sup>24</sup> This suggests he routinely spent Sunday afternoons catching up on correspondence, which David Gerber recognises as common practice in his study of emigrant letters.<sup>25</sup> Given that the majority of Ware's entries related to the Sunday classes, it is possible he habitually spent Sunday evenings updating his journal.

Ware's correspondence home is likewise useful in revealing that he did not compose drafts, in contrast to what Gerber infers was the norm for those who could afford paper.<sup>26</sup> This detail is betrayed not only in the occasional crossing-out or smudge, but in his clumsy addition of material.<sup>27</sup> Like his letters, Ware's journals were composed without prior drafting, as indicated by his fierce alterations and his apologetic note to his reader on 27 April 1851 that he 'forgot to mention' that he had successfully 'obtained W. Spundley's Baptismal certificate'.<sup>28</sup> Because of this writing practice, Ware's corrections and refinements remain on the page (Appendix A: Figure 10). Although this resulted in writing that is harder to decipher, it has also left a greater wealth of information than pre-drafted writing could. Ware's edits hint at his thought processes, his amendments signifying his concurrent reflection on events. The immediacy of Ware's entries meant he had little time to solidify his own thoughts before writing and consequently his journals preserve the words of a concerned ragged school teacher, who was often writing in the midst of pressing and uncertain circumstances.

In contrast with the committee minutes and reports that survive from other schools, Ware's opinionated retorts, dark humour, and emotive responses give his journals a

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<sup>24</sup> SHC 1487/90/1, Ware's Personal Correspondence. Letter to Ware's Father, 10 September 1852.

<sup>25</sup> David Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2008), p. 177.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> SHC 1487/90/2, Letter to James, 24 July 1841.

<sup>28</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851.

distinctive character. Something of Ware's personality is conveyed through his sparing use of exclamation marks, which were reserved for only the most scandalous stories. An especially colourful example is found when Ware learned of young W. B. Fuller's connection to Batty's circus; 'Batty is his Godfather!!'.<sup>29</sup> His narrative is not only entertaining, but hugely revealing about his relationships within the school. His reflections on individuals and conversations or his response to tragedies were often removed from the body of the entry. This is in keeping with Danahay's observation that emotion, or 'pain', 'was acknowledged only at the margins, in diaries and letters'.<sup>30</sup> Ware distanced his personal feelings from his general account either by drawing on his knowledge of Greek, Latin, French, and German or by relegating his note to brackets or margins. Upon discovering that George Harris, a boy he had previously trusted and vouched for, had routinely stolen from the RSSBS he wrote 'George Harris (φεῦ φεῦ)' had been dismissed from his position in the Red Brigade for 'keeping back money'.<sup>31</sup> In this instance he utilised Greek to convey his feelings of disappointment, lamenting '(alas alas)'. Ware's emotive response to Harris's behaviour was not only set apart from the entry by brackets, but by language also.

The content of the entries themselves, both what is present and what is not, testifies to Ware's interests and concerns. Committee meetings or larger gatherings of the LRSU are referred to only in passing in the journals. Ware made a succinct reference to a poorly attended committee meeting of local schools, writing scathingly 'No business done – What is

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<sup>29</sup> SHC 1585/1, 13 October 1850. Ware's horror may be related to Batty's associations with Chartism. In 1839 the *Manchester Times and Gazette* carried the headline 'Chartist meeting at Batty's Circus' and reported that 'The speeches delivered on the occasion were unquestionably of the most violent and seditious character we ever heard'. 'Chartist Meeting at Batty's Circus', *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 27 April 1839.

<sup>30</sup> Danahay, p. 87.

<sup>31</sup> SHC 1585/5, 29 June 1857.

the use of such a Committee?'.<sup>32</sup> Large LRSU meetings were referenced infrequently and often appear to be of little concern, as seen in his entry on 19 July 1850 when he noted 'nothing important done' with regards to a meeting at Exeter Hall that Shaftesbury had summoned.<sup>33</sup> Significant decisions or controversial matters were recounted by Ware, as when there was disagreement over the school's name, but on the whole he gave few details of committee meetings.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, across the seventeen years the journals cover Ware wrote surprisingly little about educational practice. Although he routinely noted the topics of lectures given to scholars and parents, he only referenced the children's abilities intermittently, such as his blunt statement that Charles Restieaux was 'rather stupid'.<sup>35</sup> Such details were normally given as a brief entry or an aside to a more engaging story.

As exemplified in his succinct references to committee meetings, Ware appears to have had little interest in the mechanics of the broader organisation or in recording the day to day working of the school. As a result, his journals do not provide many basic details of school life in Compton Place, such as the time classes began or finished. Ware occasionally recorded the precise number of boys in attendance, but was normally content to state that the class was either 'full' or 'thin' without quantifying this. The journals present a version of the school's story that consists of those events the author felt worthy of note. Consequently, entries mainly consist of Ware's conversations with the poor of St. Pancras, whether scholar or parent. The attention given to home-visits and his dialogue with scholars testifies to Ware's own interest in the interpersonal responsibilities of the superintendent role. In line with this,

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<sup>32</sup> SHC 1585/1, 2 May 1851.

<sup>33</sup> SHC 1585/1, 19 July 1850.

<sup>34</sup> SHC 1585/1, 19 November 1850.

<sup>35</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851.



the majority of entries regarding Sunday evening classes follow a familiar template; a comment on the fullness of the school, a remark on behaviour, followed by a longer account of his conversations with boys. This in itself illustrates Ware's commitment to the local community and his willingness to engage with the poor in their homes and upon the streets.

In addition to its record-keeping function, the journals provided a space for Ware to reflect. In discussing situations upon its pages Ware mulled over conversations and challenges. As entries were not pre-drafted it is possible to trace Ware's evolving thoughts as he wrote. Such reflection is found in Ware's entry after Simcox spoke with him regarding his desire to join the Marine Society in May 1857. He wrote of the boy 'He seems a good lad, but I have been rather shy of him (perhaps too much so) because he is an Irishman'.<sup>36</sup> Six months later, when William Suich died 'of stone or some other disease of the bladder', Ware reviewed his thoughts on the boy after visiting his bereaved mother. He recorded that Suich's mother 'said her poor boy' had been too ill for a crucial operation, dying shortly after entering hospital. Significantly, Ware noted that she 'spoke of him as having been a good boy to her' and contrasted him 'favourably' with his elder brother. At the close of the entry Ware again reassessed his former impression, noting 'Perhaps he had more good in him than I thought'.<sup>37</sup> Ware's use of 'perhaps' in both of these instances suggests he was re-evaluating, or at least questioning, his opinions upon the page. In the case of Simcox in particular, Ware's entry shows him not only re-evaluating his thoughts on the boy concerned but also reflecting upon his own former prejudices.

Ware's entries were not only a record of day to day encounters, but part of a larger

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<sup>36</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 May 1857.

<sup>37</sup> SHC 1585/5, 24 November 1857.

narrative of Compton Place's mission to bring the Gospel to local inhabitants. Ware invoked God's blessing, mercy, and aid across the pages of his journals. The book functioned as a devotional diary, with any perceived progress in the school, whether increased attendance or improved behaviour, firmly attributed to God's favour.<sup>38</sup> Conversely, challenges and worries were uplifted in prayer, as 'In all the disappointments I feel sincerely grateful to God'.<sup>39</sup> At the opening and close of the school year Ware routinely sought God's blessing, as he did at the end of the school year in 1850 when he wrote 'I sincerely pray that Almighty God will bless the efforts which I have made'.<sup>40</sup> This ritual enabled him to reflect on both his and the school's successes and failures, and to step back from the 'dailiness' to survey the broader picture. Clark's assertion that Ware was 'unconcerned with the fate of his own soul' is quickly disproved when his memoirs and family letters are consulted.<sup>41</sup> Both sources document his battles with his conscience; in particular, his memoirs relate his regret at partaking in communion prior to confirmation.<sup>42</sup> The fourth letter Ware sent his 'Mamma' while travelling in Belgium and Germany in 1841 provides a significant insight into his feelings of personal responsibility towards the poor that may have motivated his work at the school. He described seeing 'the celebrated Mouse Tower', located on a small island in the Rhine, where, according to 'the legend, Archbishop Hatto was devoured by the rats for his cruelty to the poor'.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>38</sup> The significance of the diary as a devotional space for evangelicals, and Puritans before them, has been explored by historians. See Atherstone, A. 'The Undergraduate Diary of Francis Chavasse 1865-1868', in *Evangelicalism in the Church of England c.1790-1890*, ed. by Mark Smith and Stephen Taylor, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004) pp. 109-282, Margo Todd, 'Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward', *Journal of British Studies*, 31:3 (July 1992), 236-264.

<sup>39</sup> SHC 1585/3, 31 July 1853.

<sup>40</sup> SHC 1585/1, 7 April 1850.

<sup>41</sup> SHC 1487/106/1-4, SHC 1487/90/1-24.

<sup>42</sup> SHC 1487/106/1.

<sup>43</sup> SHC 1487/90/5, Letter to Ware's Mother, 11 August 1841.

is a small but notable indicator of Ware's sense of personal accountability for the wellbeing of the poor. Given this sense of responsibility, it is unsurprising that prayers and professions of faith are embedded within the pages of Ware's journals.

Ware was not only concerned about the fate of his own soul; he was concerned about the salvation of both his scholars and their parents. His Sunday evening note that only '4 or 5' boys out of 70 had visited a place of worship is indicative of the missional element of the journals and their function as a record of God's work.<sup>44</sup> Ware expressed his frustrations when scholars were inattentive to the Gospel message on several occasions; his concerns when those attending Sucksmith's funeral in 1851 were distracted from his teaching by outside noise has already been mentioned.<sup>45</sup> Heasman has observed that evangelical concerns regarding the state of the soul led to an 'individualistic attitude' towards salvation, wherein every 'person was of infinite worth'.<sup>46</sup> In line with this, it was not uncommon for Ware to agonise over the fate of those recently deceased. Such concerns are particularly evident in Ware's entries regarding the Ramsay family. In 1862 Tom Ramsay told Ware that his mother was 'going on badly', a euphemism for her drinking habit. In the pages of his journal Ware exasperatedly asked 'What will become of that woman?'.<sup>47</sup> Two years later he wrote:

Mrs Ramsay died this evening at 9 o'clock. She seems to have died of dropsy & her death was hastened (if I am to believe what is said) by her drinking brandy [...] I fear there was very little satisfactory about her. We must leave her to the judgement of a merciful God who does not see as man sees.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> SHC 1585/1, 10 February 1850.

<sup>45</sup> SHC 1585/1, 10 August 1851.

<sup>46</sup> Heasman, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> SHC 1585/6, 30 March 1862.

<sup>48</sup> SHC 1585/7, 20 April 1864.

This entry demonstrates the crucial role Ware's faith played in his interpretation of situations. Despite his personal judgements regarding Mrs Ramsay, Ware's entry acted as a prayer to 'his merciful God' for her salvation.

The journals acted as ledgers in more than monetary terms, as they enabled Ware to piece together the fragmented evidence of scholars' spiritual journeys. After Robert Watts died in February 1858, Ware recorded the account given to him by the 'woman who keeps the lodging', writing that she 'said that before he died he was "saying his prayers" & muttered several times "something about forgiveness"'. Ware then noted, perhaps with a sense of relief after hearing the boy had said his prayers, 'He has had a very troubled life – poor boy – I trust he has now found peace'.<sup>49</sup> Accompanying this moving entry are the bold letters 'R. I. P.', beneath the name 'Rob<sup>t</sup> Watts'. Entries such as these, combined with Ware's prayerful notes point towards the journals' reflective function. It is very possible that in maintaining his journal Ware processed recent events, especially in those cases he found especially challenging.

### **'He Seems a Regular Blackguard': Making an Impression**

Upon encountering one boy in February 1851 Ware described him as 'a regular blackguard' without further substantiation.<sup>50</sup> Ware's journals demonstrate that he quickly formed judgements regarding both scholars and their families, yet he rarely expanded upon his reasons. He could certainly be charitable in his impressions; for instance, when he witnessed

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<sup>49</sup> SHC 1585/5, 3 February 1858.

<sup>50</sup> SHC 1585/1, 9 February 1851.

Fred East ‘in a street near Smithfield with his banjo looking a regular blackguard’, he added ‘which I think (poor fellow) with all his faults, he is not’.<sup>51</sup> What made one boy a ‘blackguard’ and another merely appear to be one is not detailed, although presumably Ware’s knowledge of the boys and their characters was an important factor. Similarly, Ware gave little explanation as to why he immediately liked certain scholars. When he visited the Baker household in 1851 he noted that Mrs Baker was an ‘unpleasant woman’, while her son, in contrast, ‘seems well disposed’.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, despite viewing Collier’s “profession” as a ‘tumbler’ upon the streets of St. Pancras with disdain, he nevertheless described him as ‘a nice boy’.<sup>53</sup> Ware’s faith in the character of certain boys at times allowed him to overlook occupations or traits that would otherwise be questionable.

The words of others were an important influence on Ware’s early impressions of Compton Place boys. At times his knowledge was not attributed to any one person, but rather to local gossip. This is evident in his first reference to ‘C. Day’. On 7 March 1850 Ware wrote that Day had been convicted of ‘stealing some cotton print the property of his Mother and sentenced to 4 months’, adding that Day was spoken of ‘as a very bad boy’.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, when Ware first met John Glyn at the Boy’s Refuge he recorded that ‘He seemed well & was well spoken of’.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Ware’s opinions were certainly not determined by those of others. There were several instances in which he disagreed with the judgements of others, whether adults or children. After visiting the McMarris household on 9 July 1850 he wrote

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<sup>51</sup> SHC 1585/2, 6 March 1853.

<sup>52</sup> SHC 1585/1, 15 August 1851.

<sup>53</sup> SHC 1585/2, 11 January 1852. ‘Tumbling’ was a form of begging in which children entertained passers-by with somersaults. Ware’s use of quotation marks around “profession” denotes his sceptical attitude towards the pastime.

<sup>54</sup> SHC 1585/1, 7 March 1850.

<sup>55</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 August 1857.

with reference to Mr and Mrs McMarris (the ‘chattering Irishwoman’ and the man ‘under the dominion of his wife’) that ‘They say the boy is stupid &c.’, with which Ware disagreed, writing ‘I think he only wants kind treatment’.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, when young Proctor told Ware that ‘Harris is a very bad boy – swears very much’ Ware noted his contrary judgement in his journal, writing ‘but he seems to me well disposed & improvable’.<sup>57</sup> Although Ware was attentive to gossip, his opinions were nevertheless shaped by his interaction with scholars. Prejudices and crude judgements were, at times, reconsidered within entries; again highlighting the journals’ ability to chart its author’s evolving thoughts.

Ware’s journals allow insight into the myriad of ways a teacher could perceive those he taught. In contrast with the account the *RSUM* gave in January 1849 of the relationship between teachers and taught, it is doubtful Ware anticipated his scholars would ‘smile like an angel’ in the classroom.<sup>58</sup> Ware often remarked on a child’s potential when he first encountered them; despite the LRSU’s assertion that each scholar was ‘capable of greatness’, Ware harboured low expectations for many in his class.<sup>59</sup> For instance, when Reeves told Ware that he wished to ‘start in the cake line’ he noted wryly ‘If he does he will eat all his stock himself’.<sup>60</sup> Ware’s journal entry from June 1853 shows that though he hoped to encourage children to better themselves, he experienced disappointment and frustration. He wrote that he had tried to inspire a scholar ‘to industry & to excite some feelings of ambition (!) in his mind’, yet pessimistically concluded ‘I fear with about as much effect as if he were a

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<sup>56</sup> SHC 1585/1, 9 July 1850.

<sup>57</sup> SHC 1585/5, 19 April 1857.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Every-Day Wretchedness’, *RSUM* (January 1849), p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> *Fourth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union, Established for the Support of Free Schools for the Destitute Poor of London and its Suburbs* (London: Ragged School Union, 1848), p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> SHC 1585/5, 5 April 1857.

piece of pudding'.<sup>61</sup> Ware was particularly damning of William Eaton, describing him on 29 November 1857 as 'utterly lazy & listless', before adding 'He wants to go to sea'.<sup>62</sup> The following week Ware described Eaton as 'rough & wild & ignorant' and was evidently concerned that the boy presented too great a challenge, as he noted 'I fear we shall be able to do nothing with him but send him to sea'.<sup>63</sup> Although his negative appraisal of Eaton is noted above, only four days after deeming him 'rough & wild & ignorant' Ware expanded on this description, stating 'There is much that is good about him though he is rough and ignorant'.<sup>64</sup> As the boy had hoped, he was accepted into the Marine Society. Although Ware's entries regarding Eaton demonstrated that he had low expectations for the boy, he nevertheless sought to find 'much that is good about him'. In line with ragged school philosophy, rather than turning Eaton away from the institution Ware continued his contact with the boy.

Conversely, Ware had high hopes for a number of scholars. In March 1851 he described Michael Murphy as 'a well disposed boy' and noted 'I hope to make something of him'.<sup>65</sup> He again affirmed this sentiment the following month when he again wrote that Murphy 'seems a well disposed boy', this time adding 'but of delicate health'. Just as he previously noted his desire to 'make something of him', Ware remarked 'I hope we may be the means of doing him permanent good'.<sup>66</sup> In short, Ware believed that he and the ragged school could bring about transformation in the lives of promising scholars. When Mingard was preparing to leave for Port Phillip Ware wrote on 20 February 1851 that 'He has been, I

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<sup>61</sup> SHC 1585/3, 5 June 1853.

<sup>62</sup> SHC 1585/5, 29 November 1857.

<sup>63</sup> SHC 1585/ 6 December 1857.

<sup>64</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 December 1857.

<sup>65</sup> SHC 1585/1, 23 March 1851.

<sup>66</sup> SHC 1585/1, 24 April 1851.

think, the best boy we ever had at our school and leaves us with our hearty prayers for his success & happiness'.<sup>67</sup> Given that Ware's entries concerning Mingard feature in the opening pages of his first journal, nothing is preserved of his previous interaction with the boy. Five years later to the day, on 20 February 1856, Ware wrote that Charles Restieaux was to sail for New Zealand with his mother, two brothers, and married sister. He closed the entry hopefully, writing that "The family are as likely to do well as I ever knew".<sup>68</sup> Ware's confidence that the Restieaux family would 'do well' built upon at least six years of conversations, visits, and, at times, confrontations. Such entries show the hope Ware invested in particular scholars as well as the centrality of relationships in fostering his confidence.

### **'Perhaps It's Because He Is Irish': Irishness in Compton Place**

On 4 June 1854 Michael Murphy came to the school and told Ware that his mother had 'married again & turned him out of doors & he is sleeping in doorways &c.'. Ware recorded his observations within the entry, writing he 'cried very much: but I cannot quite trust to the truth of the story'. Within the same entry Ware provides the broader context of his doubt; he wrote that there had recently been 'a kind of "rush" of Irish boys to get taken in to our Ind school'.<sup>69</sup> Despite Murphy's story being confirmed by another scholar, Ware's suspicions were rooted in Murphy's association with the other Irish boys. Although Ware's description of Murphy as a 'well disposed boy' was mentioned above, he was nevertheless made suspect

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<sup>67</sup> SHC 1585/1, 20 February 1851.

<sup>68</sup> SHC 1585/4, 20 February 1856.

<sup>69</sup> SHC 1585/3, 4 June 1854.



by his Irish identity that supposedly jarred with such optimism.<sup>70</sup>

Roger Swift's research on the experiences of Irish migrants in London suggests that they were regularly associated with crime or anti-social behaviour more generally. He argues that 'Irish districts were frequently perceived by the host population as hotbeds of crime and disorder'. It was believed that the inhabitants of these areas 'contributed to the crime rate in disproportionate numbers in the categories for petty theft and casual violence, notably drunkenness and disorderly behaviour'.<sup>71</sup> In concurrence with Swift's argument, Mayhew paid considerable attention to costermongers, whom he regarded as 'a distinct race – perhaps, originally, of Irish extraction'.<sup>72</sup> He highlighted their affinity for drinking, fighting, gambling, and theatre-going; such habits were strongly associated with the work, as he argued when stating that it 'would be difficult to find in the whole of this numerous class, a youngster who is not – what may be safely called – a desperate gambler'.<sup>73</sup> Notably, Mayhew included Camden, the locality of Compton Place, when listing the neighbourhoods costermongers resided in.<sup>74</sup> In line with Swift, Himmelfarb contends that Mayhew perpetuated stereotypes, while Rosemary O'Day's introduction to a recent edition of *London Labour and the London Poor* comments on the 'vicious circle which seems to have existed between Mayhew's conclusions and his sources' as he interviewed those who 'expressed and supported his own views most dramatically'.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, Mayhew's text, with its accounts of the Irish as 'a peculiar class of

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<sup>70</sup> SHC 1585/1, 23 March 1851.

<sup>71</sup> Roger Swift, 'The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City: Problems and Perspectives', *Irish Historical Studies*, 25:99 (May 1987), 264-276 (p.268).

<sup>72</sup> Mayhew, pp. 11-12.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 65.

<sup>75</sup> Himmelfarb, pp. 307-370, Rosemary O'Day, p. xxiii.

people' did not interrogate pre-existing notions and prejudices.<sup>76</sup>

Ware made a handful of references to Mayhew, particularly with regards to his negative reports on the ragged schools. On 30 April 1850 Ware first mentioned Mayhew's work, albeit not by name. Beside the marginal note 'Article in Morning Chronicle', Ware wrote 'Having read a statement in The Morning Chronicle (Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>) which seemed to refer to our School; I wrote to Mr Rendall'.<sup>77</sup> Ware may have also read Mayhew's account of costermongers; he certainly demonstrated similar concerns about the general immorality and criminality of costermongers. As cited earlier, Ware and another teacher attended a number of local theatres and 'saloons' in March 1851, which contained 'a great many blackguards of both sexes'.<sup>78</sup> When describing those he witnessed in greater detail he noted it 'is a place of the lowest & worst kind a small room with about 40 boys: seemingly thieves & costermongers'.<sup>79</sup> For Ware, thieves and costermongers went hand in hand with little to distinguish one from the other. As seen earlier in Ware's suspicion of Simcox 'because he is Irish', Irishness could be a cause for concern. On 22 October 1854, after writing that Shehan wanted to attend the industrial school, Ware noted with hesitance 'But we don't want too many Irish boys'.<sup>80</sup> The following month Ware permitted Shehan's entry to the school. Nevertheless, Ware also recorded his concerns, writing 'I fear he is a regular wild Irish boy'. Undoubtedly associated with his problematic Irish identity, Ware added shortly 'He jobs for costers'.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Mayhew, p. 87.

<sup>77</sup> SHC 1585/1, 30 April 1851.

<sup>78</sup> SHC 1585/1, 6 March 1851. See p. 162.

<sup>79</sup> SHC 1585/1, 6 March 1851.

<sup>80</sup> SHC 1585/4, 22 October 1854.

<sup>81</sup> SHC 1585/4, 19 November 1854. Mayhew closely associated costermongers with the Irish, dedicating a chapter to 'Irish street-sellers'.

Compton Place scholars, as already noted, were mainly ‘Irish & professedly Roman Catholics’.<sup>82</sup> When considering Ware’s early impressions and judgements of Compton Place boys, his comments regarding Irish Catholic scholars warrant particular attention. Given his concerns about Catholicism and the potentially corruptive influence of priests, it is unsurprising that Ware paid particular attention to the disruptive behaviour of Irish boys. Within ragged school literature, both priests and Catholic parents were charged with encouraging boys to disrupt classes and undermine the Protestant message from inside the classroom.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, across Ware’s journals, and especially in the earlier years, Irishness was synonymous with ‘trouble’. Within his first journal, on 20 October 1850, Ware described the Sunday evening gathering as ‘Full school but troublesome – some of the Irish boys came in’.<sup>84</sup> Ware’s use of a hyphen here associates the presence of the Irish boys with the fact that the school had been ‘troublesome’. The notion that it was the Irish boys who were causing the disturbance was expressed more clearly by Ware four months later, in February 1851, when he gave an account of the Sunday evening class: ‘Good school but a little trouble from the Irish boys’.<sup>85</sup> Ware again explicitly noted the challenging behaviour of Irish scholars at the close of the year, noting on 21 December ‘Good school until a number of big Irish boys came in when I had some trouble to keep them in order’.<sup>86</sup> In the last two examples it is noteworthy that besides the disruption the Irish boys caused, Ware described the class as ‘Good’.

Ware’s references to the difficult conduct of Irish scholars wane over the years, with

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<sup>82</sup> SHC 1585/7, anonymous letter, 18 June 1848.

<sup>83</sup> See pp. 154-155.

<sup>84</sup> SHC 1585/1, 20 October 1850.

<sup>85</sup> SHC 1585/1, 16 February 1851.

<sup>86</sup> SHC 1585/2, 21 December 1851.

such remarks reducing in frequency despite their continuing attendance. He did note six years later, in 1857, ‘Full school – I must keep out the very little boys. Several Irish boys also troublesome’; it is notable that the conduct of the Irish scholars was not the focus of this entry as it had been previously.<sup>87</sup> Ware indicates at times that the behaviour of the boys improved, as he did in February 1858 when he utilised the phrase ‘the Irish boys’ for the last time. In this entry he recorded ‘Morley, Maloney and some other Irish boys were at the school but behaved well’. He then tentatively remarked ‘I hope we may make some impression on them after all’.<sup>88</sup> Whether or not the Irish scholars were indeed more difficult to manage than others, it is nevertheless significant that Ware regarded them as so.

In his book on Irish emigration, David Fitzpatrick writes ‘the Irish overseas tended to be lumped together as ignorant, dirty and primitive Paddies or Biddies’.<sup>89</sup> Ware’s repeated references to ‘the Irish boys’ arguably reflects Fitzpatrick’s observations. The label was so established in Ware’s vocabulary that he used it as an identifying marker within margins, a space most commonly reserved for surnames and dates. In March 1851, alongside his marginal scrawl of ‘the Irish boys’, Ware recorded ‘Good school; & pretty orderly – but had to exclude some of our Irish friends’.<sup>90</sup> Seven months later he reported that there had been a ‘good many Irish boys who seemed disposed to be troublesome’, and therefore he ‘turned out a few & so broke up the covey’.<sup>91</sup> The use of ‘covey’ here further emphasises the notion that the Irish boys formed a distinct sub-culture in the school.

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<sup>87</sup> SHC 1585/5, 11 October 1857.

<sup>88</sup> SHC 1585/5, 21 February 1858.

<sup>89</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration*, p. 13. See also Paul O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales 1798-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

<sup>90</sup> SHC 1585/1, 23 March 1851.

<sup>91</sup> SHC 1585/2, 16 November 1851.

Fitzpatrick's argument infers that the Irish were 'lumped together' by individuals like Ware, whose prejudices coloured their perceptions. Of relevance here is Simon Gunn's observation that 'the identities of ethnic or sexual minorities are often shaped importantly by factors over which they have no control, such as popular prejudice'.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Gunn argues that core to an individual's personal identity are those factors that associate someone with a particular group.<sup>93</sup> As demonstrated, Ware presented the Irish boys as part of a group he commonly identified with 'trouble'. Yet, it is possible that they formed their own sub-culture within the community, perhaps even identifying themselves as 'the Irish boys'. Ware's journals show that Compton Place's Irish boys shared backgrounds, experiences, and spaces. To argue that Ware 'lumped together' 'the Irish boys' overlooks the part that the boys themselves played in forming their identities, social groups, and reputations.

Ware's detailed observations of 'the Irish boys' and their families opens up our understanding of the dynamics within migrant communities. People, both adults and children, were frequently well informed regarding their neighbours' lives; gossip and tale-telling were a common basis of conversations between individuals and Ware. Further, Ware makes frequent references to the mutual aid families provided for each other. During periods of especial hardship boys sometimes took refuge with other local families. In October 1862 Ware found that George Davis was staying with John Smith and his mother in Brunswick Street; the arrangement was still in place the following June when Ware noted 'George Davis still lodges with Mrs Smith but does not pay her'.<sup>94</sup> Whether Mrs Smith had offered Davis free lodging,

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<sup>92</sup> Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2006), p. 133.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> SHC 1585/6, 19 October 1862, 1585/6, 7 June 1863.

or whether this was dictated by circumstance is not clear. Five years later, in 1867, Ware wrote that 'Frenche', a 'very intelligent' orphaned boy, was staying with the Seipler family.<sup>95</sup> Such arrangements had the potential to benefit all parties involved, as earnings could be pooled and skills shared, as Davin and Ross have both argued.<sup>96</sup>

In some cases sharing lodgings with an acquaintance, friend, or family member increased instability rather than eliminated it. On 20 April 1851 Ware found that Mrs Murphy, mother of Michael Murphy and a widow, was residing with the Connells. As cited earlier, Ware observed that she had 'a baby at her breast', adding a rhetorical question within brackets '(q: How comes it? She has been a widow this 3 years)'.<sup>97</sup> Four days later Ware visited the Connell residence to see Mrs Murphy again and noted his recent knowledge, courtesy of a 'Mrs Reddy', that the infant was 'by some man who will not support her or it'.<sup>98</sup> Less than three weeks later, on 11 May, Ware heard that Mrs Murphy and her children had 'been turned out of Connell's room & sleep on the stairs'.<sup>99</sup> Further, there were a number of cases of conflicts between families. It is likely through local gossip that Ware was made aware of a particularly dramatic situation on 8 December 1850:

There has been a great quarrel between the Spundleys & McGraths & Mrs McG. Has gone to Draper's Place. The quarrel arose from a drunken affray between Mr S. & Mrs Pink (Mrs McG's daughter) Mrs P. soon afterwards died in the workhouse & her friends charge Spundley with being the cause of it.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> SHC 1585/7, 3 March 1867.

<sup>96</sup> Davin, pp. 38-43, Ross, pp. 156-158.

<sup>97</sup> SHC 1585/1, 20 April 1851. See p. 140.

<sup>98</sup> SHC 1585/1, 24 April 1851.

<sup>99</sup> SHC 1585/1, 11 May 1851.

<sup>100</sup> SHC 1585/1, 8 December 1850.

Clearly the conflict between Mrs McGrath and the Spundley families was especially serious; however, many other less violent disagreements took place within Compton Place's Irish community. For instance, Ware noted on 6 May 1855 'Murphy says there are constant quarrels between the Geary & Harrington families', an example that again highlights that children could be keenly aware of neighbourhood disputes even when these did not involve themselves or their family.<sup>101</sup> It is unsurprising that there were disagreements between families; overcrowding, single-room housing, the sharing of accommodation and competition for employment provided fertile ground for conflict.

Several scholars were connected by blood or marriage. Four years after she slept on the stairs outside the Connell residence, Michael Murphy's mother was going by the name 'Mrs Shehan'. Michael Murphy and Mick Shehan, previously friends and classmates, were then related by marriage.<sup>102</sup> Further, Robert Restieaux's letters from New Zealand show that his children were known to Ware as he wrote 'William works at the Press office you Remember him i dare say the Boy that was under the Bed one day when you was so kind as to visit us'.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, Robert's brother Charles was the Restieaux boy Ware referenced most frequently. Others were more distantly related; on 7 February 1858 Ware highlighted the family connection between two scholars, writing 'Little Kane says that Simcox (who is his cousin) went to Ireland last Thursday'.<sup>104</sup> Whether born in Ireland, or of Irish parents in London, a common ethnic heritage united boys such as Mahoney, Murphy, and Simcox.

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<sup>101</sup> SHC 1585/4, 6 May 1855.

<sup>102</sup> SHC 1585/4, 8 July 1855.

<sup>103</sup> SHC 1487/156/5, undated letter.

<sup>104</sup> SHC 1585/5, 7 February 1858.

Given such connections amidst Compton Place families it is unsurprising that boys naturally forged groups with peers of similar origins.

### **'I Cannot See Through Him': Trust and Distrust**

Ware's journals suggest he was often cautious about believing the children's stories. Given his professional career as a barrister it is likely that he was particularly attuned to discrepancies in stories, while his careful reporting of conversations indicates he rarely took the truth for granted. Drawing on his legal training, Ware questioned the reliability of witnesses and carefully weighed the evidence at hand. Children in particular occupied ambiguous ground; the binary notions of the child as truth testifier or as juvenile delinquent fostered distrust and anxiety.

On the evening of 8 November 1857 'Little Tom Wells' came to the school and told Ware that 'he saw a boy drowned today about 1 o'clock in the Canal at Agar Town', a slum area in St. Pancras demolished in the late 1860s. Of critical importance was the fact that 'no one else was present', and therefore the boy's story could not be corroborated. After hearing Wells's story Ware 'reported it at the Police Station but the Inspector did not believe it – neither do I'.<sup>105</sup> Ware's action in visiting the police station indicates he either initially believed Wells's account, or at least felt there was a possibility of its authenticity. In noting that 'the Inspector did not believe it' followed closely by his conclusion '– neither do I', Ware suggests the importance of the Inspector's opinion in forming his own.<sup>106</sup> Had Ware recorded the

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<sup>105</sup> SHC 1585/5, 8 November 1857.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



incident immediately after speaking with Wells it is possible that he would have composed quite a different entry. The case of ‘Little Tom Wells’ is illustrative of the challenges children’s testimonies could pose; after prefixing Wells’s name with ‘little’, Ware went on to disregard his account.<sup>107</sup> Burnett’s study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century childhoods shows that, particularly when involving negative stories, children’s testimonies were trumped by those of adults.<sup>108</sup> Jackson’s research is similarly relevant, as she notes with regards to child sexual abuse trials that where ‘respectability’ was involved testimonies received greater authority.<sup>109</sup> Certainly, the respect attached to the Inspector’s position endowed his opinion with an authority that Wells could not evoke, whether his story was true or false. Ware’s account of ‘Little Tom Wells’ draws attention to the murkiness that surrounded children’s testimonies, which inevitably impacted upon his interaction with scholars.

Scepticism and uncertainty feature prominently across entries. Ware employed a distinctive writing style that conveyed his doubt as he often predicated the statement in question with the phrase ‘he says’. This is seen in the case of Emmett, of whom Ware noted: ‘He says he went to Epsom races but I do not believe it’.<sup>110</sup> Notably, Ware employed this same linguistic tool to denote suspicion in the memoirs he composed forty years later.<sup>111</sup> Ware’s use of ‘says’ also indicates his intention to convey the exact words he recalled,

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<sup>107</sup> The multiple functions of ‘littleness’ were discussed above. In this case Wells’s ‘littleness’ seemingly underlined the childish and unbelievable nature of his account. See p. 111.

<sup>108</sup> Burnett, *Destiny obscure*, p. 51.

<sup>109</sup> Louise Jackson, *Child sexual abuse*, p. 131.

<sup>110</sup> SHC 1585/1, 5 April 1851.

<sup>111</sup> When relating the story of his family home being robbed on 26 October 1886, Ware wrote: ‘Charlotte (the Parlour maid) ~~found~~ said that she found it on coming down stairs in the morning [...] I went to the police who inspected the room: but they could not get any time of the thief. Subsequent circumstances convinced me that Charlotte did it all herself’. This instance demonstrates the influence of Ware’s legal training upon his judgements, showing both a preciseness when recording events and a keenness to establish truth. SHC 1487/106/3.

effectively composing an account he could look back on in the future should the case need revisiting. Ware's legal background shaped the way he recorded events, leading him to evaluate truthfulness and validity as he wrote. Moreover, Ware reinterpreted stories as he composed entries; for instance, rechristening the children's reasons for absence as 'excuses', as he did when Fred East told him that he had left the National School, writing 'the old excuse, want of shoes – the real reason that he was tired of it'.<sup>112</sup> Those entries relating conversations with scholars he suspected of deception are often the most expansive and detailed. In such instances Ware's journal-keeping was a means of analysing encounters, acting as an aid to disentangle fact from fiction.

Particular children were regarded as untrustworthy by Ware. On Boxing Day in 1852 Ware recorded his exchange with W. Double, who had entered the classroom at the end of the school day. He wrote succinctly 'Says he has been sleeping where he can get – very anxious to get into our dormitory but I cannot see through him. I fear he is a very crafty fellow'.<sup>113</sup> Five years later Ware described Walter Finch in similar terms, writing 'I cannot get to the bottom of him, but so far as I can penetrate, I can find nothing but selfishness'.<sup>114</sup> Again, these entries demonstrate the importance of Ware's interpretation. His repeated reference to himself in writing 'I' draws attention to the subjectivity of his concerns. Unsurprisingly, given the doubt that was attached to many boys, it was common practice for teachers to observe Shoeblack Boys from a distance to ensure that they were not, in Ware's words, 'keeping back money'.<sup>115</sup> In this vein, Ware recorded in July 1857 that 'W. Shuttleworth was watched today'

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<sup>112</sup> SHC 1585/2, 12 October 1851.

<sup>113</sup> SHC 1585/2, 26 December 1852.

<sup>114</sup> SHC 1585/5, 8 May 1857.

<sup>115</sup> SHC 1585/3, 16 August 1853. Variations on this phrase appear with regularity across Ware's journals.

and found to have 'brought in 9d short'; he was 'therefore dismissed', with Ware noting his 'fear' that the boy had 'been playing that game for some time'. Highlighting the challenges teachers faced when engaging with the children, he then wrote 'But he tells lies with such composure that he is very difficult to find out'.<sup>116</sup>

A recurring sense of ambiguity is found across Ware's journals. The descriptions of Double, Finch, and Shuttleworth above convey Ware's concern that children hid their 'true' characters from him. In his references to both Double and Finch Ware used terminology that inferred he was unable to fully evaluate children; he could 'not see through him' or 'get to the bottom of him'. Even those children who Ware was particularly optimistic about retain a sense of ambiguity in his entries. Terms such as 'appeared', 'seemed', and 'believed' hint at Ware's doubt and undermine the certainty of his entries. For instance, when George Chapman left for Canada Ware recorded 'I believe him to be a well disposed lad & trust that he will do well in the colony'.<sup>117</sup> Ambiguity is especially prominent in those entries relating to scholars who proclaimed to be sorry for their misdeeds. After confronting two boys about their apparent attendance at the theatre, Ware noted of one that he 'cried very much & appeared really penitent'.<sup>118</sup> On another occasion he noted that a number of boys went to a penny singing saloon. When he spoke to them on the matter, he recorded that while one 'seems sorry. The others do not seem to care'.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, he described how Daniel Smith 'cried very much & was or pretended to be in great distress'.<sup>120</sup> From his tentative approach

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<sup>116</sup> SHC 1585/5, 23 July 1857.

<sup>117</sup> SHC 1585/5, 17 April 1857.

<sup>118</sup> SHC 1585/5, 17 July 1857.

<sup>119</sup> SHC 1585/7, 29 April 1866.

<sup>120</sup> SHC 1585/4, 4 February 1855.

it seems that Ware acknowledged the boys were complex individuals with different aspects to their characters; he did not expect to wholly fathom any scholar.

### **‘Wonderfully Attached’: Difficult Boys and Grateful Men**

On 7 February 1852 Ware visited Daniel Smith’s father, who gave his son a ‘bad character’.<sup>121</sup> The following month, on 7 March, Ware recorded speaking with young Smith ‘about lying &c.’. In response, the boy said ‘his cousin first taught him to tell lies “but he is trying to break himself of it”’. The seriousness of lying was underscored by Ware’s additional note that ‘His cousin is now transported for life having been engaged in the murder or manslaughter last year of Mr Davis in Cromer Street’.<sup>122</sup> Four weeks later Smith’s father came to see Ware at the school bearing the news that ‘his boy had broken his leg and was in St. Mary’s Hospital and was anxious to see me’. Ware expanded on the circumstances of the incident, writing that ‘the boy ran away from home & went on a barge’, meeting ‘with an accident shortly after starting (as I understand)’. Following his brackets, Ware added hopefully ‘Perhaps it may do him good’.<sup>123</sup> Ware did indeed visit Smith the ensuing Thursday. He recorded the details of his visit in shorthand, writing ‘Went to St Mary’s Hospital to see Smith’. Ware noted that Smith ‘seemed very comfortable & self-satisfied’, adding ‘I spoke seriously to him, reminding him what a narrow escape he had from death’, he then provided details regarding the nature of the accident, writing ‘The mast fell upon him and broke both of the bones of the leg

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<sup>121</sup> SHC 1585/2, 8 February 1852.

<sup>122</sup> SHC 1585/2, 7 March 1852.

<sup>123</sup> SHC 1585/2, 11 April 1852.

beneath the knee'. Of particular significance, Ware professed to record Smith's own words, writing '– He said "It will do me good in one thing – It will break me of telling so many lies"'.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, despite this initial optimism, two months later Ware wrote 'Smith says he has had work but I don't believe it'.<sup>125</sup> In any case, it seems unlikely that Smith would have been capable of regular work so soon after his accident.

Ware's two separate conversations with Smith, in quite different contexts, highlight his attitude towards lying and his concerns about the moral danger it posed. As well as this, the entries give access to the boy's response to both his injury and his teacher's scolding. These entries are especially telling because Smith's words are preserved, confined from Ware's own text within quotation marks. February's entry details that Smith was trying to "break himself" of lying, while in March he said from his hospital bed that breaking his leg "will break me of telling so many lies". As already noted, in most cases Ware paraphrased conversations. In quoting Smith Ware implies his own regard for the boy's statements. Moreover, it is worth noting that upon hearing from Smith's father about his son's injuries Ware had remarked that the experience 'may do him good'. Smith's later suggestion that breaking his leg "will break me of telling so many lies" echoes Ware's own initial thought. Ware's contribution to the conversation is not reported; however, it is very possible that he suggested Smith use the situation for good. Whether Smith was saying what he felt his teacher wished to hear or describing genuine feelings evoked by the situation, he understood his

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<sup>124</sup> SHC 1585/2, 15 April 1852.

<sup>125</sup> SHC 1585/2, 13 June 1852.

former behaviour was deemed unacceptable by both his father and his teacher. Smith's good intentions appear to have been short-lived. In May the following year Ware wrote:

D. Smith gave a great deal of trouble. I spoke to him very strongly & warned him of the consequence of his evil courses – He looked very much inclined to cry – but did not – I never saw a boy receive reproof so meekly & so utterly disregard it – Yet he seems wonderfully attached to the school.<sup>126</sup>

Something of Smith's 'evil courses' is indicated in Ware's entry the next month, in which he noted that the boy had apparently been 'enticing' others to steal.<sup>127</sup> Even three years later, in 1855, Ware recorded challenging him about his 'past conduct' when he visited the school. According to Ware, after his words with Smith the boy 'cried very much'.<sup>128</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that despite Ware giving him 'a great deal of trouble' for his behaviour, Smith continued to attend the school. Ware's observation that he 'seems wonderfully attached' perhaps explains this.

Smith's interaction with Ware did not cease when he emigrated in 1856. Because of Smith's letters to Ware it is possible to trace their continuing relationship. More than this, their correspondence enables greater insight into Smith's regard for Ware, which may only be extrapolated from the journals. His first preserved letter was sent three years after his accident on the barge and just five months after Ware spoke to him about his behaviour in the past. It opens, not with the usual salutation of 'I hope this letter finds you well as it leaves me at present' that was common practice in emigrant correspondence, but with:

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<sup>126</sup> SHC 1585/2, 23 May 1852.

<sup>127</sup> SHC 1585/2, 13 June 1852.

<sup>128</sup> SHC 1585/4, 4 February 1855.

Dear Sir, I Wish you to come and see me has soon as you can, for I expect to go away every day as I am going into the Navy. And I wish to see you before I go away has I have Something to Say to you very particular.<sup>129</sup>

His urgent request for Ware to come ‘has soon as you can’ in combination with the boy’s desire to see Ware for ‘very particular’ reasons suggest that he played an active role in Smith’s life at this point and indicate that Smith felt it appropriate to ask favours of his teacher. His second letter, sent from ‘East Plympton’ in ‘Canada West’ on 3 December 1856 is addressed to ‘My Dear Kind Mr Ware’. Smith writes:

i take this opportunity of writing to you for the first time since i left my native country in old England. i was So sorry that i did not see you on the morning of our starting at the railway Station Euston Square nor i did not see you on the night before we started.<sup>130</sup>

These extracts evidence Smith’s affectionate and kindly feelings towards Ware, particularly in his regrets at not having seen him. A sense of indebtedness is indicated at the close of his third letter, sent in March 1857, in which he wrote ‘So Good Bye and God Send you Every Blessing you ask for your Kindness rescuing me for Transportation for Life’.<sup>131</sup> Given their conversation five years earlier about Smith’s transported cousin, there is little reason to doubt that Smith felt Ware and the school had saved him from such a fate. Further, Smith may have been remembering the books and tracts that Ware previously gifted him when he requested Ware ‘buy me a neat Bible and Prayer Book’ in his fifth letter.<sup>132</sup> Smith may have again been remembering Ware’s kindness when he informed him within his seventh letter, composed in

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<sup>129</sup> SHC 1487/159/1, 29 June 1855.

<sup>130</sup> SHC 1487/159/2, 3 December 1856.

<sup>131</sup> SHC 1487/159/3, 16 March 1857.

<sup>132</sup> SHC 1487/159/5, 1 July 1860.

Montreal in August 1860, that he was returning to London. Though the ship's captain had promised to organise employment for Smith in London, he nevertheless wrote to Ware:

i shall not Engage myself till I have ~~seen or~~ spake to you on the subject and if you dont like me to take the place I will not go against your wishes for I know that I can depend upon you to get me a situation, the reason ~~for me~~ that I consulted you upon it is because I know I have not got a better friend in London.<sup>133</sup>

This once again suggests Ware's continued active role in Smith's life, or at the very least demonstrates Smith's belief that his teacher could or would help. Despite Ware's distrust of Smith when he resided in the area, it is evident that teacher and student fostered a relationship that endured beyond his time at the school. Although Ware appears to have spoken harshly to Smith on a number of occasions, this does not appear to have hindered the boy forming a keen sense of attachment to his teacher

## **A “Dirty Beast &c..”: Abuse, Ambiguity, and the “Beast” of Compton Place**

Those instances in which children testified against adults within Ware's journals warrant particular attention. Two different cases are explored below, each demonstrating that, despite the ambiguity surrounding children's testimonies, claims and accusations were nevertheless investigated by Ware. Further, these cases highlight the challenges figures such as Ware faced in safeguarding scholars from exploitation. Finally, they draw attention to the vulnerability of poor children and to the potential for the ragged school system to be abused.

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<sup>133</sup> SHC 1487/159/7, 30 August 1860



Compton Place's William Spundley was victimised both by his abusive master, Mr Murphy and the wider Murphy family. Spundley is one of the few boys that Ware provides a date of birth for, as, after enquiring about the boy's family history he recorded that he was 'born in St. P. workhouse on 27 July 1837'.<sup>134</sup> Spundley faced challenges with both his feet and ankles, which were 'weak & withered'.<sup>135</sup> In May 1851 Spundley, still just shy of fourteen, was apprenticed to Mr Murphy, a shoemaker at 53 Gloucester Street, a five minute walk from Ware's own residence.<sup>136</sup> When the boy commenced his time with Murphy, Ware noted how helpful a 'Mr Girard &co.' had been, writing they were 'very kind in the business'; likely because of his kindness, Ware went on to utilise this contact.<sup>137</sup> While apprenticed to Murphy, in August 1851, Spundley's feet were operated on, and the boy reported to Ware afterwards that 'he did not cry'.<sup>138</sup> It is worth noting that Spundley had both a mother and a step-father; the entries relating to his time with the Murphys demonstrate the critical roles teachers could play in identifying cruelty and providing the aid that many parents were unable to.

On 25 April 1852, approximately a year after Spundley commenced his apprenticeship with Murphy, Ware underlined the boy's name in the margin and succinctly stated that he 'is not properly fed – I must look to this'.<sup>139</sup> The following week, on 2 May, Ware visited the Murphy household and observed that the boy was 'very weak & unhappy'. It seems likely that Ware voiced this concern to Spundley, perhaps in order to encourage the boy to confide in him, as he then told Ware that he 'seldom received meat' and that 'the other members of the

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<sup>134</sup> SHC 1585/1, 27 April 1851. The Murphy family Spundley was apprenticed to do not appear to have been connected with Mrs Murphy and her son Michael.

<sup>135</sup> See p. 128.

<sup>136</sup> SHC 1585/1, 8 March 1851.

<sup>137</sup> SHC 1585/1, 3 May 1851.

<sup>138</sup> SHC 1585/1, 4 August 1851.

<sup>139</sup> SHC 1585/2, 25 April 1852.

family did not treat him well'. In particular he told Ware that 'Miss Murphy', the master's daughter, 'called him a "bastard"'.<sup>140</sup> After speaking with Spundley Ware found Mr and Mrs Jenkins, the landlords of 53 Gloucester Street, where Spundley had initially stayed with the Murphys. Ware sought information on the boy's treatment, likely questioning them on his diet, as he recorded that Mrs Jenkins 'said they certainly did not give the boy enough to eat & she had sometimes given him some food'.<sup>141</sup>

Ware returned to the Murphy's home the next day and 'remonstrated strongly' with both the master and his son, accusing them of 'not giving the boy sufficient food'. In response Mr Murphy 'was very violent' and 'spoke very abusively of the boy calling him a "ruffian" &c'. Ware's journal entry details his own impression that Mr Murphy was 'an ignorant & when criticised a brutal man'. Perhaps in consequence of this impression he paid little attention to Mr Murphy's assertions of Spundley's 'disobedience, telling tales of them &c', writing that there was 'nothing really bad'. Ware was evidently concerned about the situation as he noted that he 'wrote to Mr Girard', the 'very kind' gentleman who had assisted Ware in obtaining the place for Spundley.<sup>142</sup> Eleven days later Spundley ran away from the Murphys. Ware recorded on 14 May 1852:

The *casus belli* was that Murphy threw some water over the boy's feet while he was putting on his boots – & then sent him down (at between 7 & 8 o'clock) into a damp kind of cellar where he kept him till past 1. The boy then escaped through the next shop (which is partitioned off) the owner of which let him through. We spoke to the people of the shop (Taylor) & they said he was not properly treated. We then went to the mother's house (George St King's X) & saw William. He almost fainted

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<sup>140</sup> Spundley's "bastard" status was made known to his employers in April 1851 when Murphy sought to organise the boy's contract. Spundley was found to be 'rather too young' and was told to return in a month. Ware also noted his personal concern that 'there is a hitch because he is illegitimate'. SHC 1585/1, 5 April 1851.

<sup>141</sup> SHC 1585/2, 2 May 1852.

<sup>142</sup> SHC 1585/2, 3 May 1852.

when he came in – Told him to go to Gray's Inn Hosp that day & to Orthopaedic on Monday.<sup>143</sup>

In this entry both Ware the barrister and Ware the teacher are manifested. In opening the account with the Latin term *casus belli*, translating as 'case for war', Ware drew on his legal training while simultaneously implying his support for Spundley and his belief that the boy's response had been appropriate. In throwing water over the boy's feet when 'he was putting on his boots', likely dampening his shoes also, Murphy, at best, showed little respect for Spundley and, at worst, drew attention to his 'weak & withered' ankles. Although it is unclear whether the events took place in the morning or evening, in specifying the hour that Murphy locked Spundley in the cellar and the time at which he escaped Ware recorded the approximate length of time that he was confined. For at least five hours Spundley was trapped in 'a damp kind of cellar'; in noting the time period Ware again indicated his condemnation of Murphy's actions.

On 21 May Ware noted that he visited the orthopaedic doctor who treated Spundley, obtaining a certificate stating that the boy had not received 'sufficient food'.<sup>144</sup> The very next day Spundley was summoned to Clerkenwell Police Station, charged with running away by his former master. Both Ware and Mr Girard accompanied Spundley in order to 'defend him on ground of his master's ill treatment', presumably with the evidence from the doctor in hand.<sup>145</sup> His next note on the boy is found the following week when he noted that Spundley would be staying at the school 'for the present'.<sup>146</sup>

Evidence was central to Ware's concerns about Spundley. Although he did not record

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<sup>143</sup> SHC 1585/2, 14 May 1852.

<sup>144</sup> SHC 1585/2, 21 May 1852.

<sup>145</sup> SHC 1585/2, 22 May 1852.

<sup>146</sup> SHC 1585/2, 28 May 1852.

the circumstances in which he initially heard that ‘Spundley is not properly fed’, Ware’s first action was to visit the boy himself to obtain his account. After finding that the boy was ‘very weak & unhappy’, Ware returned to speak with Mr Murphy and to observe his attitudes towards Spundley first-hand. After concluding for himself that Murphy was a cruel master, Ware began gathering condemning testimonies from those who had encountered the boy or witnessed his treatment. It is noteworthy that it was the failure to properly feed Spundley, rather than the Murphy family’s habit of speaking ‘very abusively’ of or to him, that Ware challenged them on. This may be because an inadequate diet could be identified more objectively than negative words; both Mr and Mrs Jenkins and the orthopaedic doctor confirmed Ware’s suspicions that Spundley was underfed. During his conversations with Murphy Ware witnessed the master’s attitude towards Spundley, and he consequently formed his own opinion of the man, judging him to be ‘violent’, ‘ignorant’, and ‘brutal’.

This case draws attention to the protective role Ware could play in the lives of scholars; not only did he question Spundley’s treatment, he actively sought out evidence to condemn the Murphys and later, through the school, provided a refuge for the boy. The converging of Ware’s occupations as both barrister and teacher enabled him to assist Spundley in a manner that his mother and step-father could not.

Ten years later, on 9 December 1862, Ware recorded a case of purported abuse that was closer to home than Gloucester Street. A boy named Archer, who resided in the industrial school dormitory, approached Ware who recorded the following:

Went to Industrial School and Archer spoke to me & told me that Mr Weeks had several times come into the bedroom and behaved indecently to him – & also to Dan<sup>l</sup> Carey, Martin & Bryant – that a few days ago he had done so & Mrs Weeks had caught him & driven him down stairs – calling him a “dirty beast &c” The same day Mr Fordham & Shinn came to me & Shinn told ~~me~~ us that he had meet ~~w~~Weeks

in the street almost distracted – having heard that Archer had been speaking to me. He told ~~me~~ him that he had taken some ale & also some wine last Friday (I think) & had been overcome by it – that he went into the boys’ bedroom & could not well remember what took place – & that his wife had fetched him out.<sup>147</sup>

Ware’s entry for this day is given in full above; Ware made no other remarks (Appendix A: Figure 11). The format of the entry conveys the gravity of the situation and suggests the seriousness with which Ware regarded the accusation. The entry strings together the reports of others, composing a narrative from two core sources; Archer and Shinn. Twice in the entry Ware crossed out ‘me’. In the first case Ware’s correction stressed the presence of others by replacing ‘me’ with ‘us’, while in the second he corrected the sentence to demonstrate that Weeks had spoken to Shinn who had relayed the conversation to Ware. It is possible to extrapolate that Ware’s mistaken use of ‘me’ implies his sense of personal involvement, highlighting his concern about the accusations and his feeling of responsibility. The fact that Ware paraphrased the reports may indicate that he quickly noted the events, recording them without pausing to recollect the exact phrasings. The only quotation marks used are those encompassing Mrs Weeks’s accusation that her husband was a “‘dirty beast’”. Further, it appears that this quotation was inserted after the entry’s composition, as implied by Ware’s minute scribbling of the words between two lines. Finally, it is worth observing that the whole entry is composed in smaller, more compact writing than usual, giving an impression of urgency as Ware sought to write down the information received.

Ware made no other entry until Friday 12 December when he noted:

Committee at the Industrial School – at which we charged Weeks with the offence complained of by Archer. He confessed being intoxicated & that he had been

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<sup>147</sup> SHC 1585/6, 9 December 1862. The word ‘beast’ only appears twice across Ware’s journals; the other use is in an entry from 2 December 1861 when ‘Mr Weeks gave a lecture on Wild Beasts’. SHC 1585/6, 2 December 1861.

upstairs & sat on ~~the boy's~~ Bryant's bed & that his wife had fetched him down. He also said that several months ago when the former quarrel with his wife happened he had turned Martin out of his bed & slept in it. & that Archer had then accused him of sleeping with Martin – which was false He entirely dismissed the charge of indecency “as far as he could remember”.

We examined Lampit, Brooks and Schurer who sleep in the same room – but they had never seen Weeks do anything of the kind except Lampit who said he had seen him do so to 2 or 3 boys 18 months ago – We did not believe this, thinking it had been put into his head by what had subsequently happened. We gave Weeks a month's notice to leave. He seemed in dreadful distress.<sup>148</sup>

In accordance with the committee's decision, Ware wrote on 13 January 1863 that 'Mr Weeks and family left the Industrial School today'.<sup>149</sup> The entry certainly indicates Ware's disbelief of Weeks's testimony, as his use of quotation marks around Weeks's statement that 'indecency' did not occur ““as far as he could remember”” projects doubt upon the claim.

The case of Weeks and the accusations against him provides a rare insight into the possibilities for abuse within the ragged school system, as well as the responses of both children and teachers to such behaviour. Before looking more closely at the events on 9 and 12 December, what can be seen of Weeks's previous interaction with the school, its staff, and its scholars is explored.

When Mr Nash left his position as the salaried Master of the Compton Place Industrial School in October 1857 George Weeks commenced the role with the same salary.<sup>150</sup> From the census data that records Weeks's occupation as 'Shoemaker' in 1871, Ware's reference to a letter from Weeks in January 1865 in which he noted that he 'seems to be

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<sup>148</sup> SHC 1585/6, 12 December 1862. Ware provides an idea of the boys' ages, as he wrote in March 1863 that 'several of my adult class boys have left I took in today some of the elder industrial school boys Archer, Martin, Carey & Lampit – all being about 15'. This indicates that the boys were between fourteen and fifteen when Archer made his accusations against Weeks. SHC 1585/6, 22 March 1863.

<sup>149</sup> SHC 1585/6, 13 January 1863.

<sup>150</sup> SHC 1585/5, 11 October 1857.

getting a pretty good living at shoemaking', and the many boys who acquired this trade, it is likely Weeks taught this skill to scholars.<sup>151</sup> Archer, the boy who made the initial complaint against Weeks, was undoubtedly trained in shoemaking as Ware turned him away from the RSSBS in August 1863 on the basis that he 'understands shoemaking which he ought to stick to'.<sup>152</sup> Weeks often accompanied scholars to LRSU meetings in Exeter Hall, where they may have received prizes or represented the Red Shoeblack Brigade. As part of his role, Weeks and his family moved into the rooms above the boy's dormitory in April 1858.<sup>153</sup>

Only three months after Weeks was promoted to Nash's position, a fellow teacher approached Ware to voice his concerns. He noted on 3 January 1858:

Mr Lipscombe warned me that Mr Weeks was not quite right in his moral character – very abusive & violent to his wife – and occasionally intoxicated. He says that about 4 months ago he was rather intoxicated while at the school, and that one of the boys mentioned the fact to him (Mr L). He thinks that he is really a pious man but allows himself to be overcome by temptation & his own evil temper.<sup>154</sup>

Weeks's behaviour towards his wife was, as shall be seen, a recurring theme. Similarly, Lipscombe certainly indicated that Weeks's drunkenness was not an isolated incident. We can only speculate about the possible knowledge that the scholars had of Weeks's misdemeanours, however it is notable that 'one of the boys' noticed Weeks's condition. Given the LRSU's fervent publications against drunkenness as well as Ware's own condemnation of drinking among parents, it is surprising that Ware made no further comment on the matter.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ancestry.com, *1871 England Census*, (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004) Class: RG10; Piece: 60; Folio: 89; p. 7; GSU roll: 824574 [last accessed 20 August 2016], SHC 1585/7, 15 January 1865.

<sup>152</sup> SHC 1585/6, 30 August 1863.

<sup>153</sup> SHC 1585/5, 17 April 1858.

<sup>154</sup> SHC 1585/5, 3 January 1858.

<sup>155</sup> The *RSUM* and the *OCM* published articles decrying the dangers of alcohol. In January 1852 the *RSUM* published a piece entitled 'Intemperance, Pauperism, and Crime', reporting on the dangers these posed to society. Three years later, in January 1855, the *RSUM* featured an article with a strikingly similar title, 'Intemperance, Crime, and Pauperism', essentially linking the three together. 'Intemperance, Pauperism, and

He recorded the following month that he and Weeks visited Charles Hayward, who was ill with smallpox and sleeping on the floor, and made no mention of concerns relating to Weeks.<sup>156</sup> After their initial visit Weeks visited Hayward on a number of occasions without Ware, reporting to him that the boy's condition was improving.<sup>157</sup>

Following a significant period of silence on Weeks's morality, on 5 December 1860 Ware made a rare reference to committee proceedings. Almost three years after Lipscombe's warning of such behaviour, Ware noted there was 'Great talk about Weeks drinking and beating his wife'.<sup>158</sup> Whether Weeks was present at this meeting or not is unrecorded, although it seems unlikely given the absence of any reference to his response. Despite such conversations at committee level little changed in terms of the practical responsibilities of Weeks's role. Ware recorded in July 1861 that he felt it best that Daniel Smith, the boy with a 'bad character', slept in Weeks's lodging room 'as I don't like him in the Society'.<sup>159</sup> Although Ware did not provide reasons for this decision it is possible he was concerned about Smith's influence on younger scholars. It is especially notable that Weeks, along with Ware and Berrington, led the school's 'Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society' that was formed in January 1861, an educational meeting that moved away from strictly religious material to include lectures on topical subjects.<sup>160</sup>

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Crime', *RSUM* (January 1852), p. 9, 'Intemperance, Crime, and Pauperism', *RSUM* (January 1855), pp. 41-46. Similarly, children were warned of the dangers of drink; in September 1862 young readers were warned by the kindly uncle featured in the 'Little Philosopher' feature. 'The Little Philosopher – Malt and Hops', *OCM* (September 1862), pp. 132-135.

<sup>156</sup> SHC 1585/5, 21 February 1858.

<sup>157</sup> SHC 1585/5, 23 February 1858, SHC 1585/5, 5 March 1858, SHC 1585/5, 14 March 1858.

<sup>158</sup> SHC 1585/6, 5 December 1860.

<sup>159</sup> SHC 1585/6, 7 July 1861, SHC 1585/2, 8 February 1852.

<sup>160</sup> Although such societies were often referenced in the *RSUM* there are few accounts of their content or purpose. The most extensive information is provided in an article regarding the King Edward school's meeting, which detailed the programme for January to April 1881. According to the January programme, the group would enjoy a 'Devotional Meeting' on the 3rd, 'Entertainment, "A Couple of Hours with George Cruikshank"' on



Despite Weeks seemingly continuing as usual at the school, Ware's journal entry on Sunday 27 April 1862 demonstrates his concerns:

I asked Mr Berrington today whether he had ever seen Weeks the worse for liquor. He confessed that he had several times & Mrs B had also. He was so at Peace Cottages school sometimes when he attended the Ev school. He particularly mentioned the night when he gave away Mrs Weston's presents. It shows itself generally in a wandering gaze & incoherent talk. He thinks he only takes ale – not spirits.<sup>161</sup>

It is sensible to deduce that Ware's questioning of Berrington was prompted by an event or rumour, although the exact nature of this is not given. Berrington's description that Weeks's drunkenness 'shows itself generally in a wandering gaze & incoherent talk' along with his reference to one specific evening implies that it was not a solitary occurrence.

Ware's entry the following Sunday, four years after Lipscome initially 'warned' him about Weeks, details his interrogation of Weeks on the matter. He noted that he spoke 'to Mr Weeks & told him of the reports against his sobriety'. In response Weeks admitted that 'He said he had heard of [the reports]' and confessed it was possible 'that the ale got into his head', but denied drinking spirits. Seemingly speaking on behalf of the school's committee, Ware informed Weeks that 'we wished him to take the Pledge' and asked him to 'abstain altogether'. After noting Weeks's agreement Ware closed the matter prayerfully, writing 'May God give him strength to keep his promise'.<sup>162</sup> Only eight months later Weeks was dismissed following Archer's complaints, which, rather than denying, he attributed to 'being intoxicated'.

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the 10th, 'Impromptu Speeches' on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and a 'Debate, "Has the Domestic and Foreign Policy of Mr. Gladstone Been Beneficial to the English Nation?"', 'The King Edward Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society: Programme for the Second Session', *RJUM* (April 1881), p. 67.

<sup>161</sup> SHC 1585/6, 27 April 1861.

<sup>162</sup> SHC 1585/6, 4 May 1862

It remains challenging to access the opinions of those scholars involved in the case of Weeks, despite the fact that they played an important role in testifying about his behaviour. Although Archer confided in Ware he did not represent all boys in the dormitory, as Brooks and Schurer both denied his claims. It may be that they felt intimidated by Weeks or that they simply had not witnessed the behaviour Archer described; however, it is impossible to tell. Certainly Weeks does not appear to have been disliked by scholars, or at least such feelings were not noticed by Ware in the way that he observed negativity towards Berrington. A large number of emigrant boys passed on their good wishes to Weeks in their letters to Ware, including John Campbell, George Chapman, William Eaton, Frederick Henderson, and Charles Whiteman to name a small selection. Further, on 9 June 1861 Ware noted that Weeks had received a direct letter from Campbell, highlighting that scholars had their own lines of communication with him that were independent of Ware.<sup>163</sup>

Marcus Worley's only preserved letter to Ware, composed on 2 November 1863, is of particular significance in terms of Weeks's relationships with scholars.<sup>164</sup> From Ware's journals we know that Worley was admitted to the dormitory in March 1861 on the grounds that 'his father treats him so badly', just four months after the committee discussed Weeks's drinking and violence towards his wife.<sup>165</sup> In his only surviving letter to Ware, Worley opened with apologies for his silence, stating 'I should have wrote to you before but I have been ill with the typhus fever but thank God I am better and strong again'. After this he passed on

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<sup>163</sup> SHC 1585/6, 9 June 1861.

<sup>164</sup> From Ware's journals it is evident Worley wrote at least one other letter to Ware as he mentioned it in passing on 3 May 1863. SHC 1585/6, 3 May 1863.

<sup>165</sup> SHC 1585/6, 7 March 1861. Days before admitting Worley to the dormitory Ware visited the Worley family and noted 'The father is a fine looking man – but a regular tiger when angry or drunk'. The next year Ware recorded that 'Worley's father has been taken into the Insane Ward'. SHC 1585/6, 3 March 1861, SHC 1585/6, 5 January 1862.

his respects to a number of Ware's colleagues, including Berrington and Howard, writing 'I am well and happy'. Towards the close of his letter Worley informed Ware that he 'had a letter from Mr Weeks today' stating he had 'gone to 17 North Place Banner St Lukes', just a thirty minute walk from Compton Place.<sup>166</sup> Worley was present in London over the December and January when Weeks faced Archer's accusations, leaving to join the navy in February 1863.<sup>167</sup> It is possible that he heard of the recent tumult in Compton Place from peers, or even from Ware, as it is clear that he was aware Weeks no longer resided at the school. It is worth noting that this letter was not the last of Worley's communication with the school, as he visited the following December and again in January 1864.<sup>168</sup>

Just over a year after Weeks and his family left in disgrace, Ware recorded visiting the Garrard household. He noted that a 'Gentleman named Mr William Angas has taken a great fancy to Sidney'. The 'Gentleman' initially approached young Sidney Garrard as he worked as a shoeblick 'and afterwards continually called on him'.<sup>169</sup> Angas was, according to Ware, 'about 35' and unmarried. He had taken the boy for walks, to church, and to the Zoological Gardens, as well as gifting him 'trifling presents'. Ware observed from his conversations with the Garrards that Angas 'appears quite a Gentleman has land in Australia, has travelled a great deal and is going to return to Australia next spring & talks of taking Sidney with him'. Angas had recently sent the boy a letter from Guernsey, which his mother showed Ware. Ware noted it was composed upon 'crest stamped paper' and that it was 'a very kind letter assuring him ~~of his~~ that he had not forgotten him'. Sidney's younger sister, 'Little Ellen', was, in Ware's

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<sup>166</sup> SHC 1487/166/1, 2 November 1863.

<sup>167</sup> SHC 1585/6, 15 February 1863.

<sup>168</sup> SHC 1585/6, 20 December 1863, SHC 1585/6, 10 January 1864

<sup>169</sup> SHC 1585/7, 8 May 1864.

words, ‘very fond’ of her brother’s new acquaintance. Ware’s closing remark is particularly telling, as he exclaimed ‘Very odd story!’. He then, however, reasoned ‘but certainly Sidney does not seem injured by him; on the contrary seems to have more self respect & good sense than formerly’. Angas is not mentioned again until January 1865, when Ware recorded speaking with Sidney about him. Ware detailed ‘He says that Mr Angas has never done anything for him & he thinks he has gone to Australia’.<sup>170</sup>

Ware’s entries regarding young Garrard and his ‘Gentleman’ acquaintance again show the author’s legal mind piecing together the evidence available to determine whether Angas could be trusted, and in doing so preserving it for later reference. Further, the references to Angas’s land and his crested correspondence, seemingly acting as proof of his character, again suggest the discordance between respectability and indecency. Nevertheless, the extensive nature of Ware’s entry on the subject, his remark on the ‘odd’ nature of the story, and his return to the matter the following year indicate his discomfort. Further, it suggests that his experiences with Weeks had alerted him to the dangers older men could pose to scholars. Ware’s suspicions appear to have been well-grounded. Angas was not, as he told the Garrards, unmarried. His wife, Mary, filed for divorce in June 1860, just thirteen months into their marriage. Her divorce petition listed the numerous instances in which Angas had ‘committed sodomy on the person of a Boy’. In total the divorce petition referenced three different ‘boys’ by name.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> SHC 1585/7, 11 January 1865.

<sup>171</sup> Ancestry.com, *UK Civil divorce records, 1858-1915*, (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012). Original data: Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, later Supreme Court of Judicature: Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Files, 1858–2002. J 77. Records of the Family Division and Predecessors. Records of the Supreme Court of Judicature and Related Courts. The National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England [last accessed 20 August 2016].

## Conclusion

At its most basic level, this chapter has demonstrated the value of Ware's journals and the rich and unique character of their content. It has shown that the journals were not solely day to day accounts, but a reflection of their author's interests, skills, and self. In their pages Ware was simultaneously teacher, barrister, and friend; different entries manifested these different facets of his identity. The journals give insight into the thoughts of a ragged school teacher, revealing both the ambiguity that underpinned his interactions as well as hinting at his own awareness of his prejudices. Ware's entries give access to his thought process through his crossings-out and marginal scrawls, which betray his revisions and re-evaluations. Ware's 'internal dialogue' is preserved in the pages of his journals. The journals were a reflective space for Ware; he retreated to his journals to consider situations and determine his conclusions. In detailing evidence and evaluating credibility Ware drew on his legal skills, constructing cases within his entries. As shown in this chapter, this resulted in extensive entries that preserved the words and actions of both adults and children.

In composing his journals Ware simultaneously constructed the history of Compton Place and its scholars. Rather than being a plotless day to day account, Ware's journals were a seventeen-year narrative of God's work in the school. The journals functioned not only as a means of record-keeping, but as a devotional diary that recorded God's faithfulness to Ware, to Compton Place, and its scholars. In contrast with Clark's observation that Ware's faith is not evidenced in his journals, this chapter has argued that Ware's beliefs were not only expressed in his journals but shaped their entirety. Periods of progress and periods of struggle were equally interpreted in the light of Ware's calling and God's sovereignty, giving a unique insight into the incentive that personal faith played within the explosion of home missions

and philanthropy in the mid- and late nineteenth century.

The busy schedule of a ragged school teacher is reflected upon Ware's cramped pages. More than this, Ware's many acquaintances among local inhabitants and his knowledge of, and attentiveness to, gossip, suggests that teachers could be knit within the communities surrounding their school. Further, the challenges ragged school teachers faced in engaging with scholars are compellingly represented by Ware. Ware's journals demonstrate the ambiguity that plagued his interaction with children; the question of whether scholars could be trusted was frequently returned to in his entries. Moreover, this chapter has underscored the important role ragged school teachers could play in protecting scholars from exploitation and abuse. The case of Spundley in particular draws attention to the significant role Ware played in identifying mistreatment and defending scholars against the actions and accusations of employers. At the same time, Ware's journals testify to the character and actions of other Compton Place teachers. In stark contrast with the protective role that Ware played, Weeks appears to have exploited his position at the school. Ware's entries immediately preceding Weeks's dismissal highlight the abuse that ragged schools could facilitate.

Finally, Ware's journals give rare access to the dialogue between scholars and teachers. The words and actions of children that would otherwise be lost are preserved as precious fragments within Ware's entries. Those cases in which children confided in Ware suggest that he was regarded as a trustworthy figure who could provide aid in difficult situations. The case of Daniel Smith highlights the longevity of scholar-teacher relationships. Although Ware reprimanded Smith on account of his 'lying & c.' on a number of occasions, he nevertheless was, in Ware's estimation, 'wonderfully attached' to the school. The letters Smith later sent to his 'Dear Kind' teacher support Ware's interpretation of the boy's feelings. The exchanges

between Ware and Smith demonstrate that the attachment of scholars to teachers could weather admonishment and continue after school.

## Chapter 5

### **‘The Only Freind I Have Got’: The Scholar-Teacher Relationship After School**

#### **Introduction**

On 19 July 1863 Frederick Henderson wrote to his former teacher from Ottawa. He commenced the letter by expressing his gratitude, writing ‘I feel very happy to think that I have at last an opportunity of retuning to you my direct thanks’. Anticipating Ware’s thoughts, Henderson apologetically noted ‘I daresay that you have been very anxious to hear from me & I feel verry Sorry to think that I have kept you so long without my writing’.<sup>1</sup> Henderson’s time in Canada proved short-lived; within six months of composing this letter he returned to London. In early 1866 Henderson left Britain’s shores again, this time for Australia. Writing from Melbourne in April of the same year, Henderson told Ware that his ‘letter arrived by the last mail; and, I am sure I need not say how gladly I received it’. At the close of the letter he wrote ‘I am sure I need not send my love to you, or tell you what I wish for, if I were so inclined, I really don’t know where I should find words to express my feelings’.<sup>2</sup>

These fragments of Henderson’s letters indicate the durable nature of his connection with his former teacher; having left the school in 1863, Henderson nevertheless corresponded with Ware upon his arrival in Australia three years later. The content of the letters suggest Henderson believed the relationship to be one of mutuality. He felt his teacher would be ‘anxious to hear’ from him, while his own profession of ‘how gladly’ he received Ware’s

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<sup>1</sup> SHC 1487/138/4, 19 July 1863.

<sup>2</sup> SHC 1487/138/7, 24 April 1866.



correspondence three years later echoes this sentiment. Further, in stating that he ‘need not send my love’, Henderson’s confidence that Ware understood their relationship in the same terms is indicated.

The LRSU hailed emigration as the answer to overcrowded, urban slums. It was depicted as a symbiotic system that benefitted both Britain and her colonies, who would receive a youthful and Christian workforce. Swain and Hillel observe that in such discourse ‘the model for the story of the children’s afterlives was a fairy tale in which the darkness of the past was erased by a rosy future’.<sup>3</sup> Emigration was compounded with salvation in the OCM, as songs like ‘Over There!’ proclaimed ‘O they’ve reached the sunny shore / Over there! / They will never suffer more / All their pain and grief are / Over there!’.<sup>4</sup> Lord Shaftesbury’s 1848 petition to the House of Commons resulted in Government aid being supplied to the LRSU emigration scheme; that year 150 ragged school scholars, selected from 276 candidates, left for Australia.<sup>5</sup> Six of those sent in 1848 were from Compton Place. Of the 150 scholars sent just eleven per cent were girls.<sup>6</sup> The following year Government aid was withdrawn and the LRSU established the ‘Emigration Fund’, which relied on public support. Although emigration continued, the numbers sent were considerably reduced. In 1851 84 scholars, including three girls, emigrated to Australia and Canada using the Emigration Fund, while the LRSU noted its intention to send 100 children a year.<sup>7</sup> By 1857 600 scholars in total

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<sup>3</sup> Swain and Hillel, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Over There!’, OCM (August 1860), pp. 118-119.

<sup>5</sup> ‘The Outcasts of the Metropolis’, *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 29 July 1849, *The Fifth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union, Established for the Support of Free Schools for the Destitute Poor of London and its Suburbs* (London: Ragged School Union, 1849), pp. 6-7, ‘Farewell Meeting of Friends and Emigrants’, RSM (May 1849), p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> *The Fifth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *The Seventh Annual Report of the Ragged School Union, Established for the Support of Free Schools for the Destitute Poor of London and its Suburbs* (London: Ragged School Union, 1851), pp. 10-11.

had been sent to Canada alone.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Barnardo's later child migration scheme which, as documented by Gillian Wagner, sent infants and young children without their parents' knowledge, the LRSU dictated that all emigrants should be aged fourteen or over and this rule was strictly enforced by its Emigration Committee.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, parental consent was deemed necessary for an applicant to be considered for emigration; when discussing emigration at the LRSU's fifth annual meeting it was declared that 'in every case the consent of parents, or other natural protectors, was asked and obtained'.<sup>10</sup> The application of these guidelines is seen in Ware's journals. He discouraged children below the age of fourteen from aspiring to emigration, advising one thirteen-year-old to 'wait and try to get on in this country'.<sup>11</sup> Further, Ware referenced the challenges that could be faced in obtaining parental consent; in May 1857 he spoke with a tearful George Verral, who was upset that his father 'would not consent to his emigrating'.<sup>12</sup>

Included among the 'Conditions Required of Every Candidate for Emigration' listed in an 1849 LRSU pamphlet were 'The ability to write a single sentence from dictation' and to 'read fluently'.<sup>13</sup> Yet, emigrants varied considerably in this regard. The Field Lane casebook suggests the diversity of literacy levels among the institution's emigrants and indicates that children who were unable to read or write were permitted to emigrate.<sup>14</sup> Ware's journals likewise highlight the varying abilities of emigrants, as he noted that George Roby's

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<sup>8</sup> 'Ragged School Union – City of London', *The Times*, 20 February 1857, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1982), *Barnardo* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> *The Fifth Annual Report of the Ragged School Union*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> SHC 1585/1, 17 February 1850.

<sup>12</sup> SHC 1585/5, 10 May 1857.

<sup>13</sup> *Letters from Ragged School Emigrants* (London: Blackburn & Burt, 1848), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 125-126.

application for emigration was ‘rather a close shave as his writing was so bad’. Prior to Roby’s assessment Ware took ‘some pains to cram [him] for the occasion’, observing that he and the others ‘seemed to have forgotten their schooling very much’.<sup>15</sup> The LRSU’s emphasis on emigrants being sufficiently literate had a threefold purpose. The ability to read and write would assist emigrants in obtaining good employment, enable them to study Scripture, and allow them to maintain contact with their old ragged school.

Correspondence from former scholars was frequently referenced during meetings and across ragged school literature as evidence of the movement’s success in forming good, Christian citizens. These letters were usually laden with gratitude and communicated the former scholar’s happiness and success in their new home. Correspondence was also referenced as an indicator of the enduring connection between former scholars and their teachers. During the fifth annual meeting of the LRSU those present listened to a letter from a former ragged school pupil who was travelling to a new life in Adelaide. The speaker drew particular attention to one sentence, instructing his listeners to ‘mark the next passage; it is the most pithy and interesting of all’ before quoting “‘And I will write to you again as soon as I reach Adelaide’”. In summarising the significance of this sentence, the speaker asked the audience ‘Does it not show that there is a true and religious intimacy between her and those who have befriended her?’.<sup>16</sup>

The value of preserving letters from former ragged scholars was commented on by

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<sup>15</sup> SHC 1585/5, 8 May 1857.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Proceedings at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union’, *RSUM* (June 1849), pp. 106-107.

the *RSUM* in August 1866. The article appears to reference Ware directly, expressly praising the efforts his school had made in this regard:

Some schools are more careful in noticing and recording interesting particulars than others. Thus Brunswick Street gives a letter from an old scholar, now a soldier in Burmah, expressing his love of the Bible.<sup>17</sup>

The letter mentioned here appears to be a reference to Charles Wiles's correspondence. In a letter dated 17 June 1864 Wiles reflected 'what could we do without the spirit of god nothing no nothing'. He went on to tell Ware that he had 'Read more of my Bible since i have been in india then ever i had before the more i read of it the more i want to read of it'.<sup>18</sup> According to the *RSUM*, in keeping the letters Ware archived 'true and religious intimacy' between himself and his former scholars.<sup>19</sup>

The words of former ragged school children, gloriously misspelled, form the basis of this chapter. Many of the correspondents were writing after emigrating to Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, while others communicated from posts in the army or navy. The three or four pages composed in hammocks, servant's quarters, and at campsites, reveal both the shared and diverse experiences of these former poor children. Because of the reciprocal nature of letters in most cases, and the fact that they form the remains of a dialogue between writer and recipient, they provide a window into the relationship that existed. Those correspondences composed of multiple letters make it possible to examine how exchanges evolved over time. Unlike letters preserved by other means, whether relayed in pamphlets or quoted in annual reports, this collection is fleshed out through the prior accounts of

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<sup>17</sup> 'The School Agent's Work in London', *RSUM* (August 1866), p. 181.

<sup>18</sup> SHC 1487/164/12, 17 June 1864.

<sup>19</sup> 'The School Agent's Work in London', *RSUM* (August 1866), p. 181.

correspondents' lives detailed in Ware's journals. Because of this, this source base enables the long-term significance of the relationships forged in Compton Place to be explored. Each correspondence built on different relational foundations and fulfilled different functions. For some, the relationship was marked by formality and courtesy, while for others it was one of intimacy and affection.

In analysing the letters Ware received, this chapter draws attention to the continuity that is evident. It argues that the assistance Ware gave to former scholars was often strikingly similar to that he had previously. As well as being grounded in a shared history, this chapter likewise contends that letter writing enabled relationships not only to endure, but to develop. Upon leaving the school, the relationship between scholar and teacher was no longer certain; however, the letter-writing process allowed correspondents to renegotiate their relationship with their former teacher and readjust the boundaries formerly in place. In examining the salutations and valedictions used and the content of letters, this chapter draws attention to the dynamic and changing nature of the relationships as well as highlighting the diversity of exchanges. Further, this collection of letters is emblematic of the agency former ragged scholars exercised in their relationships with teachers after their time at school. Not only could they choose not to write, but those who did correspond were able to set the tone for the epistolary relationship, and, in some cases, to establish the terms on which they would, or would not, correspond.

The letters Ware preserved give access to the testimonies of former scholars, allowing insight into their part in conversation with him. For some correspondents their letters provided a space where they expressed their angst, articulating feelings of homesickness or grief upon the death of a loved one. These instances demonstrate the stabilising affect home-

figures such as Ware could have in the lives of emigrants. Moreover, the letters reveal the important role the religious teaching acquired in ragged schools could later play; the Biblical knowledge received in Ware's classroom went on to provide comfort for many correspondents. On a different note, this chapter highlights the breadth of literacy skills found across the collection. It highlights the resourcefulness of correspondents who communicated through pictures what they were unable to articulate through words. Just as Rogers has drawn attention to 'young prisoners' desire for the books themselves and their pleasure in hearing stories', this chapter shows the value that former ragged school scholars placed on reading and writing.<sup>20</sup>

The phenomenon of child migration has received considerable attention in recent years from historians who have rejected the narratives presented in the promotional literature of child-saving groups. The trauma and difficulty that awaited many is commented upon by a number of historians, including Roy Parker, Swain and Hillel, and Wagner.<sup>21</sup> Swain and Hillel reference the recurring themes of the 'vulnerability of the "rescued child" and the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse' found in 'survivor narratives', while Wagner writes of 'the constant pattern of misfortune, adversity and poverty' revealed in the records of those children sent to Canada in the late nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> The letters Ware received concur with the above assessments; poverty, exploitation, and loneliness frequently recur. This chapter adds to current scholarship by identifying the critical role figures such as Ware could

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<sup>20</sup> Rogers, p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> Roy Parker, *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2008), Swain and Hillel, Wagner, *Barnardo, Children of the Empire*. See also *Child Welfare and Social Action*, ed. by Lawrence and Starkey.

<sup>22</sup> Swain and Hillel, p. 159, Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, p. 120.

play in providing both practical and emotional support.

In *Empire Children* Elizabeth Buettner explores the part letters played in maintaining the relationships between British parents in India and their children being schooled in England, arguing that they ‘perpetuated connections’.<sup>23</sup> Further, in her research on the significance of letters Liz Stanley states that letters are ‘the material expression of connection and continuing relationship’.<sup>24</sup> A similar argument is made by Gerber in his book on the correspondence of British immigrants to North America in the nineteenth century, where he writes that ‘relationships are not merely *maintained* in personal letters; they continue to grow’.<sup>25</sup> Building on the scholarship of Buettner, Stanley, and Gerber, this chapter analyses the nature of the relationships depicted in the correspondence and examines the role letter-writing could play in developing and deepening the connection between writer and recipient.

Unsurprisingly, and quite rightly, the letters from emigrants published in promotional pamphlets have been treated with suspicion by historians. Wagner references the emigrant letters the *RSUM* featured, observing that they functioned to ‘keep public interest in the scheme alive’ and to demonstrate that ‘the colonies had a great deal to offer’, while Swain and Hillel note that ‘child rescue’ publications used ‘emigrant letters, suitably edited, as testimonials to the importance of their work’.<sup>26</sup> Webster likewise comments on the function that letters played in ragged school promotional literature, noting that they were ‘part of the early mythology of the movement’.<sup>27</sup> The problem inauthentic letters pose is stressed by

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<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 136.

<sup>24</sup> Liz Stanley, ‘The Epistolary Gift, the Editorial Party, Counter-Epistolaria: Re-thinking the Epistolarium’, *Life Writing*, 8:2 (2011), 135-152 (p. 141).

<sup>25</sup> Gerber, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, p. 32, Swain and Hillel, p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> Webster, p. 213.

Gerber, who argues that many were fraudulently composed either in support of or opposition to emigration. Even where genuine letters were used Gerber argues that it was not unusual for an editor to have ‘radically trimmed his evidence’.<sup>28</sup>

By transcribing the actual letters that Ware received rather than those selectively published in ragged school literature, the problems relating to authenticity that Gerber has identified are avoided. Nevertheless, the typicality of the letters remains problematic. At best, the collection is symptomatic of the relationships that could be forged within ragged schools. Yet, even within this one collection the multiplicity of correspondences is demonstrated. Many chose not to write, others sent a single cursory letter thanking Ware, while some, such as William Connor, Michael Murphy, Charles Restieaux, and Daniel Smith maintained a correspondence that spanned years and featured a considerable number of letters. All in all, a total of 227 letters produced by 57 former ragged school scholars have been examined. The mean average is four per correspondent; however, Charles Restieaux alone sent 26 over eight years, while for sixteen correspondents only one cursory letter is preserved.

This chapter begins by exploring the problems the letters present, drawing particular attention to those scholars who are inaccessible in the collection Ware preserved. Following this, it examines the literacy skills evident in the letters and assesses both what this indicates about the education they received and about the value that former ragged school scholars placed on the ability to read and write. Following this, the scholar-teacher relationships evidenced in the letters is explored, with particular attention being paid to how it both evolved and continued over correspondence. Further, the important role Ware played in connecting

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<sup>28</sup> Gerber, p. 10.



those overseas to their homeland by sending newspapers and providing information on those at home is underscored. The chapter then moves on to analyse the religious content of the correspondence, drawing attention to the comfort that Scripture gave to many letter-writers. The final two sections of this chapter further mine the nature of the scholar-teacher relationships perceptible in the correspondence. In particular, the active role correspondents played in seeking material assistance from Ware is demonstrated and it is shown that in such cases Ware continued to fulfil the role he had while scholars attended the school. Moreover, the sense of attachment often evident is explored, highlighting the breadth and depth of relationships formed within one ragged school.

### **‘My Sister is Very Much Cut up’: Absent Scholars**

One of the most notable limitations of the collection is that it is only possible for letters to survive if the scholar wrote. By not writing, for whatever reason, many Compton Place boys can only be found in the documents produced by Ware himself. This is problematic as it is likely that those who actively maintained contact with Ware were those who had a particularly positive experience at the school, which leaves us in danger of creating a history of the ‘good’ children. This challenge is mentioned by John F. Waltzer in the context of eighteenth-century childhoods, who argues ‘At best our picture is heavily slanted toward “good” children and not those who filled out the ranks of the “bad company” so often warned against’.<sup>29</sup> It may not be coincidental that no letters are preserved from Charles King, the boy Ware blamed for

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<sup>29</sup> John F. Waltzer, ‘A Period of Ambivalence: Eighteenth-Century American Childhood’, in *The History of Childhood*, ed. by de Mause, pp. 351-382 (p. 365).

setting the school on fire in March 1856.<sup>30</sup> Although the letters provide an unprecedented insight into the relationships possible between a ragged school teacher and his scholars, it simultaneously silences those who may have told a different story.

This source base also inevitably leads to a history of ragged school boys at the expense of girls. The female scholars who did maintain contact would have naturally corresponded with their own teachers and as a consequence none of their letters have been preserved. Nevertheless, the post-emigration experiences of one Compton Place female are discernible, albeit second-hand in the correspondence of her brother. In his letters from New Zealand Charles Restieaux communicated the trials of his sister, Mary Ann. Through Restieaux's pen Ware was notified in February 1860 that Mary Ann 'had a child but it died'. Restieaux indicated his own personal pain at this in his statement that he was 'very sorry for had a boy and it was going to be name after me'.<sup>31</sup> In September of the same year Restieaux informed Ware that Mary Ann's husband was missing, while in an undated letter, likely composed at the end of 1860, he reported that his brother-in-law had been lost at sea. He described Mary Ann's suffering, writing, 'my sister is very much cut up'.<sup>32</sup> Mary Ann's harrowing story is preserved because her brother related it. The experiences of many more female scholars are entirely inaccessible, leaving a pronounced gap in our understanding of the movement and its impact.

The effect of gender on letter content is noted by Gerber who observed 'that the description of emotional states and immediate feelings recur in women's letters. This would

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<sup>30</sup> SHC 1585/4, 23 March 1856.

<sup>31</sup> SHC 1487/153/5, 18 February 1860.

<sup>32</sup> SHC 1487/153/11, 22 September 1860, SHC 1487/153/13, undated letter, 1860 [?].

seem to confirm the long history of association between women, emotions, and the letter'.<sup>33</sup> The dominance of male voices in this collection undoubtedly affects their content. Further, it was taken for granted by the LRSU that boys and girls would have very different experiences of emigration. Not only would they enter very different kinds of work, but it was argued they faced very different social dangers. An article entitled 'Female Emigration' featured in the *RSUM* in 1858 illustrates this. The author declared it “*absolutely necessary*” for girls to be escorted to their destination by a responsible matron as they were at risk from both “the contaminating influences of a long sea voyage” and “the many snares and temptations” awaiting them in Canada or Australia.<sup>34</sup> The letters Ware collected are unable to reveal anything of the experiences of female scholars after school besides that Charles Restieaux related.

It is worth noting that none of the preserved letters were produced while the author attended Compton Place. The period between leaving the school and composing the letter varied from a few days to eight years. It is impossible to discern what impact the passage of time may have had upon the correspondent's feelings towards Ware and the institution. Further, it is similarly problematic to view the letters as authored by the correspondent alone as they were undeniably shaped by their recipient. Gerber observes that letters 'not only sustained a dialogue between individuals, but were themselves also a mutual creation'.<sup>35</sup> Ware's interests, as well as those of the author, are reflected in the content. The emigrants naturally sought to compose letters that would engage and interest their old teacher. Several

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<sup>33</sup> Gerber, p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> 'Female Emigration', *RSUM*, April 1858, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> Gerber, p. 95.

of the letters referred to the novel animal-life and landscapes they encountered on their journey or at their new settlement. When describing his voyage to New Zealand, Robert Restieaux mentioned the ‘large Porpoises’ he saw from the ship, while Thomas Spundley wrote from India that wild beasts are ‘very Plentiful in this Country’.<sup>36</sup> While stationed in the Baltic during the Crimean War, Alexander Patterson wrote that he ‘was sorry to hear that the Hollow died but i will try to bring you something else home’, which appears to be a reference to the aloe plant he gifted Ware after returning from the West Indies in 1853.<sup>37</sup> It may be that the common references to climate and weather conditions stem more from Ware’s interests than those of the correspondents. This can be inferred from a clue given by Ramsay who begins his description of Canadian weather by stating ‘you spoke about the first winter in Canada it is sertenly veary severe but the summer is a great deal wors’.<sup>38</sup> The recipient’s questions, inaccessible to us, contributed to the substance of the emigrant’s response. Only rarely do we glimpse the content of Ware’s letters through comments such as ‘Sir you say you hope that I find friends’ and ‘you say that wander what Walter and Alfred is like’.<sup>39</sup> Even here, in the former scholars’ own letters, Ware retained a significant influence.

### **‘P.S. Excuse the Bad Writing If You Please’: Reading Ragged School Letters**

Very few correspondents wrote without spelling mistakes and fewer still utilised commas or full-stops. Such details were eliminated in the versions of emigrant letters read aloud at LRSU

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<sup>36</sup> SHC 1487/156/1, 20 May 1860, SHC 1487/160/3, 19 June 1861.

<sup>37</sup> SHC 1487/146/4, 1 October 1854, SHC 1585/3, 16 October 1853.

<sup>38</sup> SHC 1487/149/7, undated.

<sup>39</sup> SHC 1487/122/1, 4 November 1859, SHC 1487/153/14, 21 March 1861.

meetings or printed within promotional literature, leaving only grammatically correct prose. Further, in having access to the letters themselves rather than paraphrased or printed versions gives access to the crossing-out, doodles, and sketches that would otherwise have been lost altogether. Just as Ware's underlining and corrections give insight into his concerns and opinions, the misspellings and clarifications in the letters of former scholars help build a more intricate picture of their authors.

Because of the large number of correspondents, the letters preserved give an indication of the range of literacy skills found among Compton Place scholars. Little has been written on the literacy of ragged school scholars. The absence of scholarship on this topic is likely because documents from former scholars have not been identified by historians until now. The correspondents' impoverished backgrounds and limited education undoubtedly affected their ability to compose letters. Those with the least proficiency spelled words phonetically, which often resulted in a lack of uniformity within the same letter. An example of this is found in Dowie's use of both 'thorth' and 'thorgth' for the word 'thought' in his fifth letter.<sup>40</sup> By far the most commonly used phonetic spelling across the letters is 'ham' instead of 'am', while Peter Carpenter's third letter reveals that he used the term 'garn' for 'going'.<sup>41</sup> Although such haphazard spelling can prove challenging when transcribing letters – Ware's pencilled notes demonstrate he sometimes found it difficult to decipher words – it enables the reader to come within earshot of the author's dialect.

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<sup>40</sup> SHC 1487/129/4, 17 March 1862.

<sup>41</sup> SHC 1487/123/3, 12 [January ?] 1858. There are limitations to what the letters reveal about the education offered in Compton Place. Many of the spelling mistakes are also found in a letter that Ware's eldest son wrote to his mother in which he noted enjoying his time with his uncle 'verry much'. 'Verry' is a common misspelling found in the emigrant letters. SHC 1576/10/7, 13 February 1880.

The obstacle language could pose is noted by Gerber, who observes ‘Some wrote with considerable technical facility, but most had to strain against significant limitations in their use of written language’.<sup>42</sup> Composing a letter was a sizable task for even literate scholars as spelling, handwriting, and articulating feelings all presented a challenge; Charles Henley may have been referencing any or all of the above when he told Ware in his first letter that he ‘could not muster sufficient courage to write’.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, while staying at the Curragh army base in Ireland J. Archer informed Ware that he had arranged for ‘a comrade of mine to write this to you’, after which he added ‘you know I was no scholar’.<sup>44</sup> Notably, in this statement Archer presumed Ware would recollect his failures when learning to read and write. Such shame or embarrassment associated with literacy is detectable in a large number of the letters.

Not only were young men with low levels of literacy faced with the challenge of composing a letter, it was a letter addressed to the man responsible for their education whom they were at risk of disappointing (Appendix A: Figure 12). Correspondents often drew attention to their writing while providing emphatic apologies for it. John Campbell asked Ware to ‘answer this letter By return of post so as to let me no if you can under stand it as I write verry well Bad’, while James Ward added the brief post-script ‘P.S. Excuse the bad writing if you please’.<sup>45</sup> Further, Charles Wiles’s extensive correspondence suggests he was particularly conscious of his writing and continued to be so despite writing at least fourteen letters. He asked Ware to ‘exqus my writing’ in his second letter and repeated the same request

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<sup>42</sup> Gerber, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> SHC 1487/139/1, 16 October 1870.

<sup>44</sup> SHC 1487/119/1, 25 July 1866.

<sup>45</sup> SHC 1487/122/3, 9 April 1860, SHC 1487/141/2, 7 February 1859.

in his fifth, albeit spelled differently.<sup>46</sup> In his seventh letter he begged Ware ‘please to Exques the Bad writing as I am in a hurry’, after which he again beseeched him ‘please to Exqus me and do not be angry with me’.<sup>47</sup> His eighth letter contained his familiar apology, ‘Sir please to Exquas this Bad writing’, as did his ninth.<sup>48</sup> He again commented on his writing in his tenth letter, stating as before ‘I hope you will Exquas this Bad writing’.<sup>49</sup> Composed on New Year’s Eve in 1863, Wiles’s eleventh letter was particularly untidy. At the close of its third page he asked Ware to ‘try and make all this letter out’, before adding ‘Belive me you shall not have one writened so bad again’.<sup>50</sup> Overall, nine of the fourteen letters Wiles sent contain self-deprecating references to his handwriting or spelling. Although his comments sometimes coincided with especially smudged words or crooked lines, in many instances they did not. The regularity and emphatic nature of Wiles’s comments and apologies highlight his awareness of his writing. His self-consciousness likely impacted upon the content of his letters, perhaps affecting the words he chose and the length of his correspondence.

Beyond merely mentioning their poor writing, six correspondents referenced external factors to explain their untidy script. For instance Charles Whiteman attributed his ‘writting’ to the fact that it was ‘by fire ~~lit~~ light that I rote it’, while in Gibraltar George Chapman composed his letter ‘out of doors in the burning sun on a pices of stone’.<sup>51</sup> In his second letter from Australia John Hall explained he had been forced to finish it hurriedly ‘in the street’ in order to catch the ‘Read Jacket’, while James Ward noted from Canada that his ‘hand

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<sup>46</sup> SHC 1487/164/2, 31 March 1861, SHC 1487/164/5, 4 July 1861.

<sup>47</sup> SHC 1487/164/7, 23 October 1861.

<sup>48</sup> SHC 1487/164/8, 21 April 1862, SHC 1487/164/9, 7 July 1862.

<sup>49</sup> SHC 1487/164/10, 24 July 1863.

<sup>50</sup> SHC 1487/164/11, 31 December 1863.

<sup>51</sup> SHC 1487/162/5, 12 February 1861, SHC 1487/124/12, 23 July [?].

shake so' following a period of illness to explain his hazardous writing.<sup>52</sup> Charles Wiles's two brothers, George and Benjamin, were also among those who provided explanations for their writing. In 1862 George wrote 'Dear sir the pen was blunt and I could not sea so you must blame the pen and not blame me', while two years later Benjamin noted 'I hope you will exquse my Hand writing for i have only got 15 minuts to my self'.<sup>53</sup> These examples indicate that poor literacy or inept handwriting was a source of shame that emigrants hoped to explain or justify.

Improvement was regarded with pride; some letter-writers eagerly told Ware of their efforts to progress. John Dowie's correspondence highlights this as his second letter, dated 16 January 1854, drew attention to his need for an amanuensis. He informed Ware 'I am afraid it will be some time before I shall be able to write a letter by myself, after which he promised 'I shall do my best to learn'.<sup>54</sup> Four years later, in July 1859, Dowie succeeded in composing a letter in his own hand, opening 'I ham vary sory that I was so calas in righten to you for you was allways a Father to me', and closing by asking Ware to 'exquse my bad spallang and rittin'.<sup>55</sup> Although abounding in spelling mistakes, the significance he attached to composing the letter himself is suggested in his determination to learn. Charles Restieaux's fourth letter likewise shows the efforts former ragged scholars could invest in refining their prose. The letter boasts meticulously spaced lines, no doubt intended to prevent confusion with the lines overleaf on the tissue-like paper, and each character is painstakingly joined to its neighbour (Appendix A: Figure 13). On the first page Restieaux noted 'Mr Ware you said

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<sup>52</sup> SHC 1487/134/2, 1 January 1856, SHC 1487/141/3, 12 July 1859.

<sup>53</sup> SHC 1487/165/2, 26 January 1862, SHC 1487/163/1, 15 January 1864.

<sup>54</sup> SHC 1487/129/2, 16 January 1854.

<sup>55</sup> SHC 1487/129/3, 18 July 1859.



that I dont improve in my riting but I tring to by Keeping a Journal of what I do in the day'.<sup>56</sup> Whether this comment was defensive or apologetic cannot be discerned, yet it nevertheless indicates that he wished Ware to know of his efforts. This reference to Ware's words provides the sole glimpse into the teacher's part in the conversation on the matter of letter composition, demonstrating that, at least in this case, Ware commented on the quality of the letter he had received.

It was not only the physical act of writing that posed a challenge to former scholars, as limitations in vocabulary, particularly in relation to emotion, also caused difficulties. The medium of letter-writing meant it was necessary to articulate sentiments that would otherwise have been conveyed through facial or physical expression. In the case of David Laing, a Scottish emigrant in Indiana, Gerber writes:

After four sentences on his marriage, he excused himself and could say only that, if they were somehow to have the chance to talk, he could tell her more. Writing of his losses in the solitary setting of a room in a stranger's home, where he was alone with his memories and grief, proved emotionally unbearable, and, as was the case with many immigrants unaccustomed to writing, a most severe test of his ability to control language.<sup>57</sup>

Similar frustrations are evident in the letters Ware received. In the fifth letter he sent from New Zealand, Robert Restieaux attempted to describe his happiness at receiving correspondence, writing 'But we like to hear from old and Tried friends at home What Magic there is in that small word of course you understand all about that so i shall not try Poetry'.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> SHC 1487/153/4, 16 January [?].

<sup>57</sup> Gerber, p. 61.

<sup>58</sup> SHC 1487/156/5, undated.

Unlike Robert, Frederick Henderson did 'try Poetry', sending Ware a six stanza poem about his experiences of emigration. The second stanza reads:

Ah! Why did I leave thee,  
The thought oft does grieve me,  
To wander afar  
O'er the dark rolling sea?  
But glad to return,  
O do not refuse me,  
The tear drop will start when I gaze upon thee.<sup>59</sup>

The poem testifies to Henderson's wide vocabulary and his skill in conveying imagery to his reader. Henderson was one of the few correspondents who utilised commas and full-stops, and spelling mistakes appear rarely in his letters. Yet, even he found himself restricted by words. In his seventh letter Henderson expressed his frustrations to Ware and indicated that his correspondence was limited by his inability to translate his feelings to the page. At the close of the letter he wrote 'I really dont know where I should find words to express my feelings: but I will see what I can do, for next time'.<sup>60</sup> Both correspondents mentioned here were able scholars; the absence of phonetic spelling within their letters is striking in comparison to those of others. Nevertheless, articulating emotions and concerns remained difficult.

Words were not the only form of communication employed in letters; where words failed some correspondents used other mediums. In reference to Dr Thomas Steel, a Scottish emigrant resident in Wisconsin, Gerber notes that 'from time to time' his letters 'contained elaborate illustrations – maps of his region and neighbourhood, of his property and of new

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<sup>59</sup> SHC 1487/138/5, undated. See Appendix C for the full text of Henderson's poem and further details.

<sup>60</sup> SHC 1487/138/7, 24 April 1866.

acquisitions of land carefully done to scale, and diagrams of improvement to his house'.<sup>61</sup> The illustrations found in a small selection of Compton Place letters are quite different. Doodles or sketches were used, not to convey precise facts as Steel's did, but to give a snapshot of the artist's new or, sometimes old, life. For those correspondents limited by words, drawings, however juvenile, provided another means of communication.

It is possible Ware encouraged his scholars to draw, although there is no direct evidence of this. The fact that he made no clear mention of promoting drawing in his journals does not rule out the possibility; it is worth noting that he made sparing references to teaching reading and writing. The only instance in which Ware touched on the topic is found in his entry on 7 March 1852 when he recorded that young James Ward 'draws very nicely', before adding '(considering the circumstances)'.<sup>62</sup> Ware's personal letters to his parents testify to his own knowledge and appreciation of art, as he wrote to his mother from Bonn in July 1841 that the pictures adorning the walls of Aachen Town Hall 'are all very bad'. In the same letter he detailed that the St Gereon Basilica in Cologne housed 'very singular old pictures of the early Flemish school – but in other respects is inferior to ~~most of~~ the collections in most of the German & Belgian towns'.<sup>63</sup> Ten years later Ware referred to his own enjoyment of drawing in a letter to his father, as he penned 'I am very sorry to say however that we have had no time for sketching'.<sup>64</sup> Further, when Ware's eldest son stayed with his uncle for a short time in 1880 his letters home reflected his father's interest in pictures. In one he thanked his mother for sending 'drawing books', while in another he described an incident on his uncle's

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<sup>61</sup> Gerber, p. 322.

<sup>62</sup> SHC 1585/2, 7 March 1852.

<sup>63</sup> SHC 1487/90/3, Letter to Ware's mother, 31 July 1841.

<sup>64</sup> SHC 1487/190/13, 16 September 1852.

farm during which a plough became stuck in a pothole and afterwards concluded ‘I will try and draw you a picture of it as well as I can’.<sup>65</sup>

Twenty years earlier Ware received correspondence from former scholars who also chose to communicate with him through pictures. Following his time at Compton Place, William Eaton entered the Marine Society and was stationed on board the *Venus*, a training ship moored in Woolwich.<sup>66</sup> His first letter to Ware, dated 11 February 1858, reveals his poor literacy and the consequent dependence on others this caused. The body of the letter was evidently composed by an acquaintance, although this fact is not directly referenced in its content. Alongside Eaton’s name at the close of the letter is a large cross, presumably made by the former scholar himself. At the bottom of the page his name is found a second time, composed in a large and unsteady hand and accompanied by numerous smudges and ink stains. Just above this is a bold, slightly clumsy anchor that resonated with Eaton’s nautical surroundings in Woolwich. Overleaf Eaton put pen to paper again, drawing a four-legged figure beside which he noted the lyrics to a popular American song by Stephen Foster and, in the same shaky hand he had used to sign his name, he wrote ‘~~Old dog tray is ever failful~~  
~~greaf will not drive him away~~’ (Appendix A: Figure 14).<sup>67</sup> It is possible that the challenge he faced in both spelling the words and maintaining straight lines caused him embarrassment; however, his reasons for crossing out the lyrics may only be guessed. Similarly, whether the picture related to a dog he had known in London, perhaps a loved childhood companion,

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<sup>65</sup> SHC 1576/10/8, 19 February 1880, SHC 1576/10/9, 27 February 1880.

<sup>66</sup> The Marine Society was established in the eighteenth century for the purpose of educating boys on training ships. Those present at the ‘anniversary festival’ in 1848 were told that the society ‘was the means of rescuing youths from vice, of supplying the navy, the India service, and the merchant service with good sailors’. ‘Royal Marine Society’, *Morning Post*, 23 March 1848, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> SHC 1487/130/1, 11 February 1858.

can only be speculated. Three months later Ware received another illustrated letter from Eaton. This time the amanuensis also signed the letter, closing 'I remain Your Obed Ser<sup>t</sup> for W. Eaton John McMillan'. Although Eaton's signature is absent in this instance, he again provided a nautical illustration for Ware in the form of a ship, quite possibly intended to be the *Venus*.<sup>68</sup> Despite the limitations of his literacy, Eaton communicated through drawing. In his small maritime-themed scribbles Eaton sent Ware personal souvenirs of his experiences in Woolwich, and perhaps conveyed more than his written words permitted.

Quite a different illustration was sent by Walter Restieaux on behalf of his brother, Charles. Like Eaton, Charles sought to communicate with Ware in picture form. However, Charles's picture provided Ware with a level of insight into his experiences that Eaton's simplistic doodles could not. His pencil sketch depicts a tent in Lyttelton, New Zealand, 'the plase in which we his' (Appendix A: Figure 15).<sup>69</sup> The different foliage that encircled the tent, whether bushes, grasses, or trees, is conveyed in the picture and set a fertile scene for its viewer. Using hatching, toning, and scribbling techniques, Charles created a rich image of his new surroundings. The intricate detail conveyed in the picture is telling; the tent lines and raised bucket handle testify to his desire to communicate the smallest features of his life in Lyttelton to Ware. Charles's emotional investment in the image is suggested in Walter Restieaux's letter that accompanied the drawing, which explained 'Charley forgot the sketch so i have sent it he was so sorry that he forgot it'.<sup>70</sup> As well as time, the drawing also represents Charles's financial investment in the value of visual communication. His sketch was not a

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<sup>68</sup> SHC 1487/130/2, 15 May 1858.

<sup>69</sup> SHC 1487/153/3, 13 November 1859.

<sup>70</sup> SHC 1487/154/1, 12 January 1860.

footnote or added embellishment on a letter; rather, it encompassed a whole page itself. Given the expense of paper that was frequently referenced by correspondents, this detail suggests Charles's belief that sending a drawing was worth financial outlay.

### **'So Good Day Mr Ware': Salutations, Valedictions, and Negotiations**

Opening salutations and closing valedictions frame each letter Ware received. David Fitzpatrick stresses the ritualised nature of salutations and draws attention to the derision with which tired and over-used phrases came to be regarded.<sup>71</sup> Fitzpatrick's observations resonate with the Compton Place letters as variations of the opening 'I write these few lines to you hoping to find you well as it leaves me at present' recur throughout the collection. Such language was commonplace in the letters of ragged school emigrants more widely and, as Fitzpatrick notes, was considered humorous by some. The reaction of those gathered when one such letter was read at the LRSU's annual meeting in 1849 is telling:

“Dear mother, I write these few lines to you, hoping to find you in good health, as it leaves me at present. (much laughter.) [That's a stereotyped exordium.] I have arrived with safety in the colony, after a long and wearisome voyage”.<sup>72</sup>

The square brackets that explain the audience's '(much laughter)' were used elsewhere in the *RSUM* article to narrate the meeting or provide explanations; the necessity of explaining the laughter is worth noting as it was evidently not taken for granted that readers would be aware the phrase was 'a stereotyped exordium'.

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<sup>71</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'Emigrant letters: I Take up My Pen to Write These Few Lines', *History Ireland*, 2:4 (1994), 15-19 (p. 17).

<sup>72</sup> 'Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Ragged School Union', *RSUM* (June 1849), p. 107.

It is possible to interpret salutations and valedictions as corresponding traditions, perhaps learned as part of a set format for letter-writing. Yet, despite the ritual undoubtedly involved in the composition of salutations and signatures the light they can shed on relationships is significant and useful. Waltzer argues in relation to eighteenth-century children's letters that the salutations and signatures employed are demonstrative of the relationship between writer and recipient.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Gerber asserts such details were valued by those both composing and receiving letters as they 'are what make personal letters unique' and they 'fulfill the emotional expectations of the correspondents'.<sup>74</sup> The form of the opening salutation defined the relationship between writer and recipient; formal or informal, acquaintance or friend. Whether the correspondent was in Bombay, Christchurch, or Woolwich, their relationship with Ware had altered in that they were no longer his scholars. When composing letters correspondents were forced to determine what was appropriate, re-negotiating and reinterpreting their relationship with Ware in a new context. The words they used when opening and closing correspondence give insight into how former scholar regarded Ware and their relation to him. Although these details can easily be passed over or dismissed, the fact that they could carry a weight of significance for both author and recipient makes them worthy of attention when analysing the letters former scholars sent.

The majority of letter-writers adopted a respectful tone and commenced letters with 'My Dear Sir', before closing with a phrase similar to 'Your obedient servant' or 'Your faithful servant'. There is little variation on this format in the letters of the fifteen former scholars that sent a single letter to Ware. Cornelius Keane's letter, sent from Ireland in 1857, opened

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<sup>73</sup> Waltzer, pp. 362-363.

<sup>74</sup> Gerber, p. 2.

‘respected Sir’ and closed with ‘I remain your obident Servant’.<sup>75</sup> Five years later Benjamin Elliot sent a single letter that he composed in Gibraltar, in which he addressed ‘Dear Mr Ware’ and referenced himself as ‘your Obeident servent’.<sup>76</sup> The only letter from this grouping that diverged from this formal tone was that sent by John Redan in Canada, who closed his correspondence ‘your well wishing freind’.<sup>77</sup> Hesitancy over what was deemed appropriate is also detectable. Walter Restieaux was evidently conscious of overstepping boundaries in his interaction with Ware as he closed his second letter with an apology for writing to his home address, explaining ‘I have lost your other residence’.<sup>78</sup> Richard Warner’s third and final letter is especially significant as it demonstrates his hesitation about the appropriate level of intimacy for his valediction. At the end of his letter Warner closed with ‘I have no more to say at present but I remain Your ~~affectionate~~ humble & obedient servant’ (Appendix A: Figure 16).<sup>79</sup> By striking out the terminology he deemed unsuitable Warner gives a rare insight into his perception of the relationship and its boundaries.

On the other hand, the correspondents’ new context caused a number of former scholars to re-evaluate their relationship with Ware. More personable terminology was adopted by those who overlooked, or perhaps rejected, the anticipated formula for student-teacher correspondence. Despite commencing his fifth letter by addressing Ware as ‘Sir’, John Campbell called him ‘Dear friend’ five times in its body.<sup>80</sup> With striking similarity to Warner’s hesitant valediction, Campbell merged formal and informal language by signing ‘your ever

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<sup>75</sup> SHC 1487/172/1, 24 October 1857

<sup>76</sup> SHC 1487/131/1, 12 January 1862.

<sup>77</sup> SHC 1487/150/1, 22 October 1857.

<sup>78</sup> SHC 1487/154/2, 25 June 1862.

<sup>79</sup> SHC 1487/161/3, 23 June 1865.

<sup>80</sup> SHC 1487/122/5, 29 August 1861.



affectionate friend an humbell servant in the Lord'.<sup>81</sup> The variation in salutations and valedictions found in the correspondence reflects the breadth of relationships that existed between Ware and his scholars.

Negotiations over letter frequency likewise demonstrate the changing boundaries of the student-teacher relationship, while the varying ways correspondents approached this issue highlights that there was no standard way to address it. Gerber observes that, unlike direct interaction, the rules that govern 'correspondence must often be deliberately negotiated, for in contrast to ordinary speech in a conversation, writing cannot utilize the unspoken signs and cues and body language that instruct face-to-face conversational encounters'.<sup>82</sup> Compton Place correspondents had to articulate their hopes regarding letter frequency in their letters to Ware if they wished him to respond sooner. Given the respect and politeness many correspondents demonstrated in their salutations and valedictions, it is predictable that this matter was treated tentatively. Thomas Jones closed his second letter with the three words 'Please write soon', while John Leonard politely suggested that he would 'bea pleased to Write and receive a letter from you every Week if if it Ware posoble'.<sup>83</sup>

The three letters Ware received from John Bryant are demonstrative of the anxiety that the absence of a response could induce. In his first letter, composed in August 1865, Bryant made no mention of his desire for a reply, although his request for 'a few stamps' indicates he expected a reply.<sup>84</sup> He composed a second letter to Ware the following month,

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<sup>81</sup> SHC 1487/122/5, 29 August 1861.

<sup>82</sup> Gerber, p. 63.

<sup>83</sup> SHC 1487/142/2, 20 July 1857, SHC 1487/143/2, 7 August 1855.

<sup>84</sup> SHC 1487/121/1, 3 August 1865.

which closed with the request ‘Dear Sir will you write to me as soon as you have time’.<sup>85</sup> In November, three months after his initial letter, Bryant again pursued contact from Ware. He stated on the first page of his three-page letter, ‘I have wrote to you twice and I have not received an answer yet’. Notably, immediately before this statement Bryant apologetically noted his own fault by stating ‘I am very sorry but I could not write to you before’. This apology in itself discloses something of Bryant’s expectations in terms of letter frequency as his previous letter had been composed six weeks before. He closed the letter with the words ‘please write to me as soon as you have time’, before signing ‘Your dear And Affectionate Friend’.<sup>86</sup> Bryant’s three letters provide a valuable insight into his regard for Ware and his epistolary expectations, while the act of pursuing contact with his former teacher demonstrates his desire to retain a relationship.

Others were more forthright still in reminding Ware of his duty to respond. In his ninth letter, composed on 1 June 1861, Daniel Smith complained to Ware of his father’s failure to respond. He noted ‘i have wrote Seven Different letters to my father ~~and~~ and i think it very unkind of them because i dont know that i have done them any harm’. In the same letter he referenced Ware’s tardiness in responding, writing ‘Dear Sir, I recieved your last letter dated Sept<sup>ber</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> and i have had none since that and i have wrote several to you’.<sup>87</sup> Smith’s letter, both in his references to his father and to Ware, stresses the reciprocity of letter-writing. His assertion that he had sent ‘several’ letters to Ware without a response indicates his belief that correspondence could be equated with a contractual agreement that

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<sup>85</sup> SHC 1487/121/2, 14 September 1865.

<sup>86</sup> SHC 1487/121/3, 2 November 1865.

<sup>87</sup> SHC 1487/159/9, 1 June 1861.

both parties were subject to. Smith was not patiently awaiting a gracious response from his better, but was expecting a reply that Ware was obliged by social convention to give.

The correspondent who was most frank on the topic of frequency and response was Charles Restieaux. It is unsurprising that his letters give access to negotiations about letter frequency given their volume and the time span they covered. Restieaux laid aside the polite hints employed by others, instead being explicit about his expectations and consequent disappointment when Ware failed to adequately uphold his side of the correspondence. Unlike the majority of letter-writers who asked Ware to ‘write soon’, Restieaux specified the frequency with which he expected Ware’s replies. In his tenth letter he wrote ‘Mr Ware you have not sent me a letter every month but I do so you must not forget me’.<sup>88</sup> He again reminded Ware of his obligation in his eleventh, stating simply but clearly ‘Please to send every month a letter to me’.<sup>89</sup> Restieaux’s twenty-first letter, like Smith’s ninth, indicates that he felt the letter-writing duty impressed upon both Ware and himself. In it he wrote:

Mr Ware when I got the paper I did think there was a letter for me but no and I have not had one for a Long time now but I must not speak like that for I was a long time too but you have forgiven me that I know.<sup>90</sup>

In this assertion Restieaux applied the same rules of conduct to Ware as he did to himself. By not responding in a reasonable timeframe he too had been guilty of neglecting the relationship; he evidently felt it was necessary for him to be ‘forgiven’ by Ware and he held his teacher to the same standard.

It may be argued that in articulating his disappointment at receiving a newspaper

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<sup>88</sup> SHC 1487/153/10, 16 August [1860?]

<sup>89</sup> SHC 1487/153/11, 22 October 1860.

<sup>90</sup> SHC 1487/153/21, 15 July 1864.

without a letter Restieaux safeguarded his relationship with his teacher. The postal system was not always reliable, and on this matter Gerber observes that ‘the anxious realization that the fate of their letters was out of their control began to dawn early in the history of many exchanges of letters’.<sup>91</sup> International correspondence required:

considerably more responsibility for the maintenance of the bridge of communication across the ocean than their counterparts would in later centuries. They could not take for granted that a letter put in a postal mailbox down the street would predictably end up across the Atlantic Ocean in a relatively unvarying number of days, and that, if their correspondent answered them immediately, in a certain number of days, they would soon find a letter in their private mailbox at home.<sup>92</sup>

The most efficient way to protect and maintain an epistolary relationship was to communicate disappointments rather than timidly awaiting a response that may not arrive. This approach enabled silences to be explained and absolved and the correspondence to continue. Given that Charles Restieaux was the most prolific correspondent, it is likely not coincidental that his letters contain the clearest expressions of his expectations.

### **‘One of There Own’: Projections and Audiences**

As projections of their author, letters are complex and multidimensional. On this topic Gerber highlights the intricacy of identity, writing that ‘letters might show evidence of self-deception or the deception of others is only to say that letters bore all the cumbersome baggage that relationships assume, and all the complexity of the people who wrote them’.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, letters straddle an uncomfortable ground, being simultaneously private and public,

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<sup>91</sup> Gerber, p. 180.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-3.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

confidential and open. The preponderance of greetings suggests an expectation that content would be passed to others or read aloud in the classroom. After recounting a dramatic story of his time on Canadian rivers, Henderson made it clear that it was not solely for Ware's benefit as he closed saying 'present my River Rapids [story] & compliments to Mr Berrington'.<sup>94</sup> A keenness to communicate success is often found, for instance in John Campbell's almost boastful statement 'i hope they are all getting on well is a earnest wish of one of there own mates who is now a sailor'.<sup>95</sup> It was commonplace for former scholars in the navy or army to visit the school wearing their uniforms. In one case Ware's own scepticism is barely hidden in his journal entry, in which he cynically noted of one visitor 'He has been at sea & seemed to think a great deal of himself – offered to give the boys a lecture on seafaring matters'.<sup>96</sup>

It should be remembered that the potential motives for deceiving a recipient such as Ware are wide-ranging. Gerber observes that there are 'all sorts of obvious reasons, some of them quite compelling, why correspondents might not want to tell the truth. Sickness, unemployment, poverty, marital discord, drunkenness, or abject failure might prompt worry and concern in one's readers'.<sup>97</sup> Through his connection to former scholars over letter Ware acted as the keeper of their reputations at home. Unsurprisingly, the awareness of a wider audience appears to have caused a reluctance to communicate negative news. Perhaps for fear of worrying or disappointing his reader, Murphy expressed regret when communicating

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<sup>94</sup> SHC 1487/138/4, 19 July 1863.

<sup>95</sup> SHC 1487/122/5, 29 August 1861.

<sup>96</sup> SHC 1585/5, 22 March 1857.

<sup>97</sup> Gerber, p. 97.

his hardship, stating 'I ham sorry I ham oblight to meshen that I hevent a nuf to heat'.<sup>98</sup> Further, James Ward sought to control the audience his letter might reach by instructing Ware to keep particular details from his mother. After telling Ware that he had been 'thrown from a horse and kick in the under jaw', breaking his front teeth and jawbone, he instructed him 'not to tell mother'.<sup>99</sup> This instance shows that correspondents wrote with their audience in mind and were sensitive to the way news may be received; although Ward informed Ware of his injuries, he did not wish to worry his mother.

The desire to control the information sent home is likewise detectable in the letters of two of the Restieaux brothers, Robert and Charles. Upon his arrival in New Zealand in 1860, Robert drew on his ragged school religious education when describing the feelings evoked on his journey, stating 'who dare say there is no God you don't know how the sights draw your heart to God you seem to feel yourself a child and him your Father'.<sup>100</sup> Five years later he told Ware that he was the 'protegee' of George Augustus Selwyn, New Zealand's 'hard working and unfatiguable Bishop', writing 'i feel quite proud of it i can assure you'.<sup>101</sup> Only a day prior to writing this letter, however, Robert sent an ambiguous note in which he spoke of 'a person holding a Respectable Position' in Christchurch who may well contact Ware. In the case that anyone outside the Restieaux family contacted Ware Robert implored him to keep the letter 'as it may be of great consequence', assuring Ware that the contents of any such letters would be untrue. Evidently aware of the strangeness of this request, Robert closed the letter with the ambiguous words: 'you no doubt will wonder at the effusion from

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<sup>98</sup> SHC 1487/145/3, 24 June 1855.

<sup>99</sup> SHC 1487/141/4, 25 September 1859.

<sup>100</sup> SHC 1487/156/1, 20 May 1860.

<sup>101</sup> SHC 1487/156/4, 14 November 1865.

me and think that I am changed but i am not a coward'.<sup>102</sup>

A year prior to this confusing exchange Charles Restieaux informed Ware of his concerns about his sibling, writing 'My Brother Robert is geting Worst i think for he Beats his poor Wife and will not let her come and sit with my Wife or me Mr Ware', adding 'I Realy think he is going out of his mind fast'.<sup>103</sup> Further, Robert's fourth letter hints that there were elements of his character that Ware did not know, writing he would 'be supprised if you were to see me now fore i am a corse unseemly fellow you have not the slightest conception of my Roughness'.<sup>104</sup> The disparity between the faithful image normally presented in Robert's letters jars with the violent character his brother describes and the ambivalent fragments contained in his own correspondence. Tellingly, the *Press*, a New Zealand daily newspaper, reported on 18 July 1866 that a 'R. Restieaux was committed to the Lunatic Asylum as being of unsound mind'.<sup>105</sup> Without access to the *Press*, Ware was left to fathom Robert's paranoid letters. Given that he made no note in his journal or annotation upon the letter, it is not possible to deduce how he read Charles's concerned words that his brother was 'going out of his mind fast'.<sup>106</sup> This case powerfully underscores the distance letters could provide and is a reminder of the necessity of caution when interpreting content.

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<sup>102</sup> SHC 1487/156/3, 13 November 1865.

<sup>103</sup> SHC 1487/153/21, 15 July 1864.

<sup>104</sup> SHC 1487/156/4, 14 November 1865.

<sup>105</sup> 'Resident Magistrate's Court', *Press*, 18 July 1866, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> SHC 1487/153/21, 15 July 1864.

## **‘To Think You Had Not Forgot Me’: Pasts and Papers**

In corresponding with former scholars Ware connected emigrants to both their homelands and their pasts. This was done practically by sending British newspapers, as well as emotionally through references to shared acquaintances, locations, and memories. In her research on the experiences of American immigrants, Susan Matt argues that most ‘did not completely shed their pasts or free themselves of homesickness’. Rather, they ‘faced forward but also looked backwards, gradually integrating themselves and their families into American culture’.<sup>107</sup> Homesickness, Matt writes, ‘was a bridge that connected their old identities with their new, and preserved a sense of self in an alien environment’.<sup>108</sup> In his assertion that ‘personal identities are dependent on the individual’s sense of continuity in relation to people and place’, Gerber highlights the critical role contact with individuals at home could play in stabilising an emigrant’s sense of self.<sup>109</sup> Letter-writing enabled correspondents to sustain their ‘links with the past’ while establishing a new life overseas.<sup>110</sup> In other words, corresponding with Ware could provide continuity and connection for those whose lives were otherwise unstable and disjointed.

Buettner writes in *Empire Families* with regards to ‘Empire children’ schooled in England, that through contact with their offspring overseas ‘Parents vicariously came into contact both with their distant children and their homeland when the post arrived from Britain’.<sup>111</sup> In a similar way, correspondence from Ware was simultaneously correspondence

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<sup>107</sup> Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 170.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>109</sup> Gerber, p. 57.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>111</sup> Buettner, p. 136.



from England; a longing for England also manifested as a longing to hear from Ware and vice versa. For instance, when discussing his need for stamps in order to respond to correspondence Henry Fenn noted his joy at receiving mail from Ware, writing 'a letter from England is a rare thing'.<sup>112</sup> The close association between Ware and a correspondent's homeland is especially demonstrated in John Hart's first letter, in which he apologetically wrote 'I am sorry that I did not write before this. I can't forget old England yet'.<sup>113</sup> Further, the loneliness that Ware's letters abated is suggested in Charles Garrard's opening line that he was 'very glad to hear from you', after which he added 'this is the first time i have herd from England since I left it'.<sup>114</sup> An absence of correspondence from England could cause distress to those overseas; Charles Wiles conveyed his anxiety in his concluding request 'Sir I hope you will answer this letter faithfully for I have not receved one for 7 months or 9 I forget wich from any one at home'. Wiles's ongoing concern for those in London is powerfully conveyed in his closing remark 'that makes me uneasy'.<sup>115</sup>

Through British newspapers emigrants were made aware of developments in their homeland and could continue to read of places and people they were familiar with. James Ward's fifth letter related he was 'Sorry to hear about the Strike as it will couse a good deal of distress among the poor people', and Charles Wiles noted that he had read of a fire in London.<sup>116</sup> After three years in Canada, Whiteman's pride in his English roots was nevertheless still evident. Upon hearing rumours of Prince Albert's death, Whiteman wrote

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<sup>112</sup> SHC 1487/132/2, 1 February 1861.

<sup>113</sup> SHC 1487/137/1, 3 April 1856. This may not be the spelling found in Hart's letter as the one preserved by Ware is his own transcription, likely because he gave the original to Hart's mother.

<sup>114</sup> SHC 1487/133/1, 17 May 1860.

<sup>115</sup> SHC 1487/164/13, 5 February 1865.

<sup>116</sup> SHC 1487/141/5, 8 January 1860, SHC 1487/164/4, 26 June 1861. The fire Wiles referenced was the Tooley Street fire, which lasted two weeks.

to Ware in early January 1862 asking him to confirm or deny the reports.<sup>117</sup> Ware evidently sent Whiteman a copy of the *Illustrated London News*, as his ensuing letter detailed that he was ‘very Glad to see the papper’, yet at the same time was ‘very sorry to hear of the Death of Prince Albert’.<sup>118</sup> On the final page of this letter, penned by the Madawaska River in Renfrew, Canada, Whiteman recited the adapted anthem of a nation in mourning:

Lord heal her Bleeding hart  
Assuage its grivous smart  
Thy heavenly peace impart  
God save the queen  
Our Royal widow bless  
God guard the fartherless.<sup>119</sup>

Within the same letter Whiteman wrote that he was ‘very sory to her of that dreadfull Accident at Hartley Colliery and so are all the people that have heard of it’. Moreover, he noted that ‘there was one old man the Cried aloud about it when I red read it to him’.<sup>120</sup> This letter in particular gives insight into the continued attachment many emigrants had to their homeland and demonstrates the strong emotional responses negative newspaper reports could cause.

Despite the upsetting reports British newspapers could contain they nevertheless brought comfort to overseas readers. Peter Carpenter informed Ware that he was ‘thankful’

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<sup>117</sup> SHC 1487/162/7, 4 January 1862.

<sup>118</sup> SHC 1487/162/8, 20 February 1862.

<sup>119</sup> SHC 1487/162/8, 20 February 1862. This version of the National Anthem was composed by the Rev. Newman Hall and used at a number of church services across Britain commemorating the Prince Consort, although it was not used during the funeral ceremony. Whiteman may have had access to Newman Hall’s anthem through British newspapers, Canadian newspapers, or services taking place in his neighbourhood. ‘Funeral Service in the Town Hall To-day’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 23 December 1861, ‘Funeral of the Prince Consort’, *York Herald*, 28 December 1861, p. 10, ‘Funeral of His Late Royal Highness the Prince Consort’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 28 December 1861, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> SHC 1487/162/9, 15 March 1862. Here Whiteman was referencing the Hartley Pit disaster, a Northumberland mining accident that took place on 16 January 1862 and killed 204 men.

for the newspaper he sent and had ‘read it through 2 or 3 times’.<sup>121</sup> His post-script politely suggested that he would be grateful for more newspapers in the future, as he noted ‘P.S. News comes in handy at sea’.<sup>122</sup> When thanking Ware for ‘them papers’ Benjamin Elliot also articulated his appreciation for the escape they provided, writing ‘they pass away many unhappy hours’. Likewise, when Thomas Jones requested an *Illustrated London News* he noted ‘I find much pleasure in reading some home stories’.<sup>123</sup> Charles Whiteman’s fourth letter described the joy newspapers could bring, as he wrote ‘it is a Great pleasure for to read about a Cuntry that I was brought up in’. Nevertheless, he added afterwards ‘But I like this Cuntry much Better and I will try and stay in it’.<sup>124</sup> A similar sense of attachment to England is detectable in James Wright’s letters. Like Whiteman, Wright informed Ware that he liked Australia ‘verry well’ and didn’t ‘thinck I shall ever come home again’. Again, like Whiteman, Wright expressed his gratitude for the ‘news papper’ Ware sent and closed his letter with a request for the *British Workman*.<sup>125</sup>

As well as connecting former scholars to England by sending newspapers, Ware’s correspondence simultaneously connected them to their old community. Given that the ragged school was the medium through which correspondents originally encountered Ware and the context that framed later interaction, it is natural that letters referenced this shared history. The potent hold memories may have over individuals is asserted by Gerber, who writes ‘Memories may not always be pleasant ones, nor conversations always amicable, nor

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<sup>121</sup> SHC 1487/123/2, [?] May 1857.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> SHC 1487/142/2, 20 July 1857.

<sup>124</sup> SHC 1487/162/4, 20 October 1860.

<sup>125</sup> SHC 1487/167/4, 21 February 1866.

home always associated with security, let alone affection, for these memories to have a powerful hold on our consciousness'.<sup>126</sup> For a significant number of letter-writers, memories played a strong part in their communication with Ware. Many reminisced about their time at Compton Place, grounding their letter content in memory, as William Eaton did when he told how he 'off times think off the words on sunday evening at my school'.<sup>127</sup> John Hall used similar language when he informed Ware that he 'offon think of you my kind teachers And the happy knights that i have spent with you'.<sup>128</sup> The most detailed narrative is found in a letter from Charles Henley, written from Tipperary, which recited his first encounter with Ware. He recalled how he had 'wandered about penniess & hungary. You met me at the bottom of Gray's Inn Rd & took me to the St. Pancras Industrial School'. In concluding his narrative Henley wrote 'since then you have been my best Friend and I shall never be able to repay your goodness'.<sup>129</sup> In detailing the very street their encounter took place on, Henley affirmed his ongoing connection to both Ware and London, to people and place.

The letters of former scholars tapped into the continuing Compton Place community by enquiring after others still there. Although addressed to Ware, the majority included greetings intended for other teachers and scholars or featured questions about their wellbeing. At the close of his second letter, George Chapman asked Ware to 'Give my best Respects to Mr Wood tell him I kindley thank him for is kindness', while James Wright noted 'give my kind love to mr and mrs Howard' as well as 'to all the boys and to all the commite'.<sup>130</sup> John

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<sup>126</sup> Gerber, pp. 3-4.

<sup>127</sup> SHC 1487/130/1, 11 February 1858.

<sup>128</sup> SHC 1487/134/2, 1 January 1856.

<sup>129</sup> SHC 1487/139/1, 16 October 1870.

<sup>130</sup> SHC 1487/124/2, 25 August 1854, SHC 1487/167/3, 14 September 1864.

Dowie's first letter, written in September 1853, instructed Ware to 'Give my love to Mr MacGregor, and to Mr Snape, & to Mr Howard. as they all were so very kind to me. I will be glad to hear of them anytime'.<sup>131</sup> His third letter, sent five years later, reiterated the same sentiment as he asked Ware to 'give my Love to Mr MacGregor and till him that i Should be very hapy to hear form him at any time that he would rite'.<sup>132</sup> When reminiscing about the school Benjamin Wiles included Mr Fordham in his account and used the opportunity to send him greetings, writing 'i shall not forget what you taught me when i was in the school and Mr Fordam to and i thank Mr Fordam for that Bible he gave me'.<sup>133</sup> A comparable statement is found in his next and final letter, in which he wrote 'I shall not be home for some time but I shall not forget what I learned at your School and with Mr Fordam'. On the final page of his letter Wiles asked Ware to 'tell Mr Fordam I shall not neglect his Bible that he gave me'.<sup>134</sup> Patently, Wiles was keen to communicate his spiritual development to his former teachers. Further, Wiles referenced the letter he had received from Ware when he noted 'i am very glad to here that Mr Berrington is getting on very well', demonstrating that Ware passed on news of the school and its teachers in his correspondence.<sup>135</sup> Charles Restieaux's second letter is similarly helpful in reiterating the content of Ware's letter as in it he related:

you say that the Brunswick Buildings Sabath scholars is very regular and the most of them are young men and that Mr Howard is still with you in the Shoe Black

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<sup>131</sup> SHC 1487/129/1, 26 September 1853.

<sup>132</sup> SHC 1487/129/3, 18 July 1859.

<sup>133</sup> SHC 1487/163/2, 20 August 1864.

<sup>134</sup> SHC 1487/163/3, 29 January 1864.

<sup>135</sup> SHC 1487/163/2, 20 August 1864.

Society and that it is very numerous i shall always be happy to hear of it [prosperity?] for the benefit that i myself received from it.<sup>136</sup>

News from Ware represented an enduring connection to London, as well as an ongoing association with those who continued to live there and attend the school. In this way, former scholars remained part of the school community through their epistolary connection with Ware.

Benjamin Wiles's assertion above that he 'shall not forget' the Compton Place lessons is part of a recurring narrative of forgetfulness. Remembrance and the worry of forgetfulness is a theme that bleeds across a significant number of correspondences, and it therefore warrants particular attention. To forget those in England or to be forgotten yourself signified estrangement from your English past and the loss of personal history. In observing that 'An important source of personal identity is our relationships to those with whom we share the oldest of such relationships', Gerber highlights the inherent value of a shared, remembered history.<sup>137</sup> Ten out of 57 correspondents, or eighteen per cent, used the words 'forget', 'forgot', or 'forgotten' in the context of their relationships with others. Often correspondents used the term to dispel concern that they had forgotten Ware, the school, family, or friends. After referencing the staff he wished Ware to pass his 'kind love to' from Nova Scotia in December 1856, Daniel Smith wrote 'although i am far away i do not forget them'.<sup>138</sup> In his third letter, written in March 1864, Thomas Ramsay noted 'my dear Mr Ware i dare say you thort that i had forgotten you and the kindness that i have Reseved from you and all the gentlemen Coneted With the Sorciety'. He then assured his teacher of the contrary, writing 'i

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<sup>136</sup> SHC 1487/153/2, 20 August 1857. Ware underlined Restieaux's words 'most of them are young men' in pencil, writing above '(I am sure I did not say this)'.

<sup>137</sup> Gerber, p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> SHC 1487/159/2, 3 December 1856.

do not Beleave thear has been One day Past that i [have not] thort of your kindness to me'.<sup>139</sup>

For Charles Wiles, the act of writing signified he had not forgotten Ware as he opened his tenth letter with the sentence 'i now sit down to write a few lines to you which i ought to have done before now but never mind Better late then never it Dose show that i had not forgot you'.<sup>140</sup>

Other correspondents promised they would not forget those remaining in London, as Alexander Patterson did in his first letter, sent in 1854 from the H. M. S. *James Watt*, that told Ware 'i will not forget you when i am at turkey and at Russia'.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, when writing from Toronto in 1858 George Chapman requested Ware 'plies to call at my mother' and tell her that 'pleas God i will not forget her'. He expanded this promise to include Ware himself, adding 'nor will i forget your kindnes to me as long as i live'.<sup>142</sup> As seen in the excerpts given here, letter-writing enabled those overseas to affirm their continuing attachment to and concern for those remaining in England, and thereby strengthen or at least maintain relationships.

As well as being keen to demonstrate they had not forgotten those at home, former scholars sought reassurance that they themselves had not been forgotten. Upon hearing from Ware, Charles Whiteman responded 'it is a Great pleasure ~~to me~~ to me to think that I am not forgot'.<sup>143</sup> When a timely response did not arrive, the worry of being forgotten surfaced as an explanation for silence. After sending 'that kind schoolmaster Mr Fraser' two letters, John

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<sup>139</sup> SHC 1487/149/3, 12 March 1864.

<sup>140</sup> SHC 1487/164/10, 24 July 1863.

<sup>141</sup> SHC 1487/146/1, [?] 1854. Patterson's letter, sent while still docked in Plymouth, is vaguely dated 'thursday 1854'; however, it can be placed in early March as Ware noted receiving the letter on 11 March. SHC 1585/3, 11 March 1854.

<sup>142</sup> SHC 1487/124/6, 9 February 1858.

<sup>143</sup> SHC 1487/162/8, 20 February 1862.

Campbell wrote to Ware ‘I hope he has not forgotten me all at once’.<sup>144</sup> Just as Charles Wiles’s tenth letter suggested a letter signified remembrance, he opened his twelfth writing ‘I now sit down to answer your most kind and welcome Letter and i was verry much please when i read it to think that you had not forget me’.<sup>145</sup> In telling Ware, as referenced earlier, ‘you have not sent me a letter every month but I do so you must not forget me’, Charles Restieaux likewise indicated the close association between letter-writing and remembrance.<sup>146</sup> The act of remembrance, like letter-writing itself, was reciprocal. The reciprocity of memory is demonstrated especially clearly in Michael Murphy’s words ‘I hope you wont for get mee for I shall never forget you’.<sup>147</sup> In remembering and being remembered those no longer resident in Britain retained links and found a source of stability in ever-changing and uncertain circumstances.

### **‘Gods Eyes Is On Us’: The After-Life of the Ragged School Scholar**

Like Ware himself, the Christian message he shared with scholars during their time at Compton Place was not forgotten. Their letters provide a rare opportunity to explore the impact that childhood religious teaching had in later years. References to God frame much of the correspondence; prayers and notes of thanksgiving saturate the pages. The extent to which religious themes pervaded letters varies widely – not only between correspondents, but across the letters individual correspondents sent. Some correspondents made only cursory

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<sup>144</sup> SHC 1487/122/2, 18 December 1859.

<sup>145</sup> SHC 1487/164/12, 17 June 1864.

<sup>146</sup> SHC 1487/153/10, 16 August [1860?].

<sup>147</sup> SHC 1487/145/3, 24 June 1855.



references to God as part of their letter-writing practice, such as John Leonard who opened his second letter with the common phrase ‘I am quite well at present thank god’.<sup>148</sup> Others made more explicit references to their faith, such as Robert Restieaux whose poetic reference to the majesty of God he saw manifested on his journey was noted above. Just as memories of Compton Place shaped the letters of former scholars, the school’s teaching formed a significant component of the correspondence Ware received.

Echoes of religious literature are detectable in the metaphors and phrases correspondents employed. The letter Charles Wiles composed on Easter Monday in April 1862, which noted ‘Sir easter Sunday was a day of Rest that we all know’, closed with a rhyming couplet: ‘all Round the thron of God in heaven ten thousand Children stands / Who sins are all through Christ forgiven a holy happy Band’.<sup>149</sup> With its reference to a crowd of children, this two-line quotation is reminiscent of the hymns and poems recited in ragged school literature intended for scholars, such as the *OCM* or *Ragged School Rhymes*. Similarly, John Campbell’s first letter to Ware, sent from the H. M. S. *Euryalus*, appears to draw on evangelical teaching. His proclamation ‘I wish Dear Sir, to try all i Can to put all my trust in him for my Correct Compass and Safe Guide for him to Steer me through this life’ employs a metaphor frequently seen in ragged school literature.<sup>150</sup> The Bible was often depicted as a ‘compass’ that guided its readers; it was ‘a perfect *Compass* for Christian sailors to steer by,

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<sup>148</sup> SHC 1487/143/2, 25 March 1855.

<sup>149</sup> SHC 1487/164/8, 21 April 1862.

<sup>150</sup> SHC 1487/122/1, 4 November 1857.

over the troublesome waves of this world'.<sup>151</sup> Campbell's third letter, sent in April 1860, closed with a short verse:

The Gospel Ship

And are you not afraid some storm  
your Bark will overwhelm  
we cannot fear the Lord his hear  
our Father at the helm.<sup>152</sup>

These words are taken from the second verse of C.M. Tane's 'The Gospel Ship', featured in John Stamp's *The Christian's Spiritual Songbook*. Notably, the third verse of Tane's hymn reads:

Our compass is the sacred word,  
Our anchor's blooming hope,  
The love of God's our maintop-sail,  
And faith our cable rope.<sup>153</sup>

The striking difference in Campbell's spelling and script in the main body of his letter and that found in his rendition of 'The Gospel Ship' strongly suggests that he had a copy of the hymn before him.

A number of scholars referenced the churches they attended, such as Charles Restieaux who informed Ware that he can 'get to church now every sunday'.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, Alfred Restieaux, Robert and Charles's younger brother, informed Ware 'that i go to the sabath School as i know you will be glad to heare'.<sup>155</sup> As Alfred's note demonstrates, letter-writers were alert to Ware's concerns about their faith. In George Chapman's tenth letter to Ware he sought to reassure his teacher, perhaps in response to a question his teacher had

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<sup>151</sup> 'The Bible; Or, the Bread That Talks with Him That Eats It', *RSM* (September 1865), p.213. See also 'Poetry: Gems from the "Annie Jane"', *RSM* (January 1854), p. 99.

<sup>152</sup> SHC 1487/122/3, 9 April 1860.

<sup>153</sup> John Stamp, *The Christian's Spiritual Song Book* (London: Brittain, 1845), p. 29.

<sup>154</sup> SHC 1487/153/5, 18 February 1860.

<sup>155</sup> SHC 1487/155/1, 12 January 1860.

posed, writing ‘as regards my character I still retain it thank god’. Qualifying this, Chapman went on to note that he ‘sing in church every sunday’ and regularly attended a Bible class.<sup>156</sup> Spiritual habits were frequently recited by correspondents, such as Robert Watts, whose fourth letter noted ‘I have read the Testament all through. & I pray to God every night & morning’.<sup>157</sup> In the same way that correspondents sought Ware’s approval of their handwriting, they equally sought his approval of their lives and characters.

This is not to say, however, that such references to faith were insincere. Just as the promise of salvation aided ragged school scholars through difficult times as children, it continued to in later years.<sup>158</sup> Religious faith is most evident in those letters that describe worrying or dangerous situations. As Gerber writes, traumatic journeys were frequently referenced in the letters of British immigrants to North America, writing that ‘No aspect of the narrative of emigration was more likely to be recalled with aversion than the ocean passage’.<sup>159</sup> According to Charles Garrard, he took comfort in his faith during his difficult voyage to Canada. In the letter he composed on 17 May 1860 from Vancouver Island, Garrard described the ‘verry rough passage’, relating how ‘the wind blew the ship roled the sea roared’. Nevertheless, Garrard ‘feared it not as i knew there was the same God for the sailor boy at sea as those at home’.<sup>160</sup> Writing just two days after Garrard, Charles Restieaux wrote from Lyttelton that while working on a small, three-person boat there was ‘a nasty sea the waves would send us strate up and Down again’. He described his fear that ‘we should

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<sup>156</sup> SHC 1487/124/10, 1 November 1860.

<sup>157</sup> SHC 1487/176/4, 3 March 1857.

<sup>158</sup> See pp. 129-132.

<sup>159</sup> Gerber, pp. 163-164.

<sup>160</sup> SHC 1487/133/1, 17 May 1860.

have been Lost', before detailing how 'the Lord sent a small craft to us' and rescued them. After describing this, he reflected 'I thank My god the giver of all things I think of him moor and moor and thank him that I am still alive'.<sup>161</sup> Four months later, when writing to inform Ware that his sister's husband was missing at sea, he added 'All that I hope is that he was Prepared for a Crown from the grate god above'.<sup>162</sup> In the same way that Ware himself proved a source of stability in the lives of former scholars, the teaching they encountered in his classroom provided comfort and assurance in difficult times.

It was noted above that the *RSUM* asserted the worth of preserving the letters of emigrants by referencing a letter from a former Brunswick Street scholar 'expressing his love of the Bible'.<sup>163</sup> The former scholar responsible for this letter, Charles Wiles, provides an exceptional trajectory of his faith across his fourteen letters to Ware. His third letter, composed in May 1861, noted that 'When first I left my home I was verry lonely indeed but now I hame quite hapy'. When expanding on the reasons for his contentment, Wiles explained 'I feel that god is with me' and 'pray at night and morning'.<sup>164</sup> Notably, both Wiles's first and second letters to Ware had no religious content.<sup>165</sup> In his eleventh letter Wiles noted 'we all must mind what we do for gods eyes is on us all', while his twelfth stated, as referenced above, 'what could we do without the spirit of god nothing no nothing'.<sup>166</sup> His next letter, sent two years later, informed Ware that he was 'fare happyer than I was'. Expanding on this, he wrote 'the Reason is because I am Seaking Christ Our Blessed Saviour'. In Wiles's

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<sup>161</sup> SHC 1487/153/8, 19 May 1860.

<sup>162</sup> SHC 1487/153/11, 22 September 1860.

<sup>163</sup> 'The School Agent's Work in London', *RSUM* (August 1866), p. 181.

<sup>164</sup> SHC 1487/164/3, 21 May 1861.

<sup>165</sup> SHC 1487/164/1, 10 April 1860, SHC 1487/164/2, 31 March 1861.

<sup>166</sup> SHC 1487/164/11, 31 December 1863, SHC 1487/164/12, 17 June 1864.

estimation, he was 'fearmly fixt', having 'Build my mind in Jesus'.<sup>167</sup> Wiles's final letter, composed just ten days after he described being 'fearmly fixt' in Christ, opened with thanksgiving to his God for his health 'and all other Blessings he bestowes on us'. After passing on greetings to various teachers Wiles gave his reason for writing again so soon, noting 'Sir I feel a desire to be a Scripture Reader. For the holy Spirit works in me and Seem to tell me that I am to Be a faithful Servant'. Wiles then sought Ware's feelings on this, writing 'I wish you to let me know weather you think I could get to be the above mentioned if I was in London'. Despite noting 'answer this Letter as soon as you get time', a phrase usually employed in closing a correspondence, Wiles proceeded to compose three more pages detailing 'How wonderful how Incomprehensible are the ways of God'.<sup>168</sup> Having seemingly experienced a religious epiphany, Wiles sought confirmation of his call from a figure he deemed central to his faith, his old ragged school teacher.

### **'Send Mee A Small Trifle to Get Mee Home': Material Exchanges**

It was not only letters that were mailed to and from those overseas. Requests for material favours feature regularly in the correspondence Ware received, which is partially explained by referencing Gary Howell's research on the experiences of poor emigrants. Howell argues that despite abiding by social norms of humility and reverence the poor were also assertive when seeking help. The letters he studies indicate that many emigrants believed the wealthy in their

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<sup>167</sup> SHC 1487/164/13, 5 February 1866.

<sup>168</sup> SHC 1487/164/14, 15 February 1866.

homeland had a duty to provide aid, and they were consequently unafraid to seek it.<sup>169</sup> Expanding on this notion, however, the pre-existing relationship between Ware and correspondents was one in which he provided material assistance during times of need. Those letters that presented requests and sought practical aid suggest that in many cases this dynamic did not change.

The need for paper and stamps is an especially prominent component of letters. It is worth noting that the entire collection of letters is composed of a wide variety of notepaper. A handful used stationery headed with an image of their location, like Charles Wiles's third letter, which was sent from Ireland bearing a print of Portobello Barracks in Dublin. Both Charles Restieaux and Thomas Ramsay used black-edged mourning paper in the letters they sent immediately after their mothers' deaths. Yet, the majority of letters used plain, folded sheets that were approximately five inches by seven inches. After Michael Murphy requested paper from Ware his letters were composed on such non-descript paper, which many indicate that others received paper from Ware also. Stamps, however, were referenced with greater frequency. In both his fifth and sixth letters Daniel Smith referenced the difficulty he faced in obtaining stamps while on board the H. M. S. *Valorous*. This problem was not unique as John Crawley, Henry Fenn, Michael Murphy, and William Reeves all explained their silence by the fact they were unable to purchase stamps.<sup>170</sup> It was not uncommon for correspondents to directly ask for stamps as Henry Fenn did in his second letter from Vancouver Island,

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<sup>169</sup> Gary Howells, "For I Was Tired of England Sir": English Pauper Emigrant Strategies, 1834-60', *Journal of Social History*, 23:2 (1998), 181-194 (p. 188).

<sup>170</sup> SHC 1487/159/5, 1 July 1860, SHC 1487/132/2, 1 February 1861, SHC 1487/159/6, 25 July 1860, SHC 1487/128/1, 13 November 1860, SHC 1487/145/3, 24 June 1855, SHC 1487/152/2, 19 March 1855.

noting ‘pleas send me a few postage stamps for we can get none out here’.<sup>171</sup>

There is no indication that Ware resented such requests, on the contrary it seems he faithfully forwarded the required materials when notified of necessity. In other cases he pre-empted problems, perhaps interpreting silence as a sign that a former scholar could not write rather than that they were choosing not to. For instance, within the same letter that Reeves referenced the lack of stamps he also wrote ‘as you have been so kind as to forward me four [stamps] I make every apology for not writing before’.<sup>172</sup> Charles Garrard’s only preserved letter to Ware suggests that he felt able to request stamps even if they were to be used in other correspondence. He asked his teacher to ‘be so kind as to ask my parents to write to me and send me their direction’, before requesting ‘some postage stamps so that i can rite to them’.<sup>173</sup> In such cases Ware facilitated the correspondence, enabling former scholars to maintain contact with him as well as with others.

The items requested were not limited to those required for corresponding. Perhaps the most specific request is found in William Eaton’s first letter, in which he asked Ware to acquire him a ‘maurling spike’.<sup>174</sup> His ensuing letter reveals that Ware sent the item requested, as Eaton related ‘Kind Sir I received a Marline spike from you a few days ago and I am sure it is a very Good one’.<sup>175</sup> Requests for books in particular occur frequently across the correspondences. When on board the H. M. S. *Donegal* John Crawley asked Ware to ‘send me one of your hymn Books’, explaining ‘i should like one of them’.<sup>176</sup> Similarly, Henry Fenn

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<sup>171</sup> SHC 1487/132/2, 1 February 1861.

<sup>172</sup> SHC 1487/152/2, 19 March 1855.

<sup>173</sup> SHC 1487/133/1, 17 May 1860.

<sup>174</sup> SHC 1487/130/1, 11 February 1858. A marling spike is a marine tool used to untie knots or loosen rope strands.

<sup>175</sup> SHC 1487/130/2, 15 May 1858.

<sup>176</sup> SHC 1487/128/2, 17 March 1861.

wrote 'you would oblige me very much by sending me som books to pass the time'.<sup>177</sup> Notably, in March 1850 Ware's journal states that he gave prayer books to pupils including Charles Restieaux. Seven years later Charles wrote from New Zealand 'Mr Ware i shall be obliged to you if you can send me some books'.<sup>178</sup> Likewise, in July 1851 Ware noted a visit to Restieaux's mother to organise an apprenticeship for the boy; thirteen years later Restieaux wrote 'if I came home Old England you must see about a Place for me'.<sup>179</sup> Such striking continuities between Ware's journals and the letters former scholars composed suggests that in the same way he assisted the boys when destitute in London, he did so after they emigrated. This is not to argue that correspondents maintained contact with Ware for material gain or practical assistance, but rather that Ware continued to fulfil the supportive role he played previously.

Michael Murphy undoubtedly presented the weightiest list of requests to Ware. The opening of his first letter, composed on 2 June 1855, reads:

Sir i Take the Opportunity to Write these Few Lines to you and Should be much Oblidged to you if you Could Send me a Small Box Some pens and ink a Comb a Clothes Brush Boot Brush and a Black Handkerchief Note Paper and Stamps as i Shall Not be Able to Write to you Again as i have not Enough Money to buy Paper With.<sup>180</sup>

After enquiring about teachers and friends, Murphy closed his letter with the sentence 'if you Would Be kind Enough to Send me All i ask i Shall Ever Remain your Obedient Servant Michael Murphy'.<sup>181</sup> This last remark has been underlined in pencil, beginning at 'if you

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<sup>177</sup> SHC 1487/153/2, 20 August 1857.

<sup>178</sup> SHC 1585/1, 3 March 1850, SHC 1487/153/2, 20 August 1857.

<sup>179</sup> SHC 1585/1, 6 July 1851, SHC 1487/153/23, 15 September 1864.

<sup>180</sup> SHC 1487/145/1, 2 June 1855.

<sup>181</sup> SHC 1487/145/1, 2 June 1855.



Would be kind Enough', presumably by Ware. Murphy was plainly more brazen than other correspondents, most of who appear tentative when asking favours. In contrast to the majority, Murphy commenced his letter with his requests. Most correspondents postponed requests to the end of their letter where they immediately preceded their signature; it wasn't until the fourth and final page of Charles Restieaux's second letter that he asked Ware to send books.<sup>182</sup> The practice of placing requests at the end of correspondence may have been a matter of social convention; perhaps it was deemed more palatable to ask favours following a well-written or interesting letter.

Murphy further defied social convention by implying that he would not maintain their epistolary relationship unless Ware provided the necessary items. In other words, Murphy asserted that it was Ware's duty to equip him if he wished to hear from him. Although a boot brush and a black handkerchief are not necessary writing implements, Murphy evidently believed Ware could and would obtain the items for him. Ware's underlining of Murphy's words may indicate his discomfort, or perhaps his objection, to the sentence. Nevertheless, he complied with Murphy's terms as in his ensuing letter, sent just nine days later, Murphy thanked Ware 'for the kindness you have shown me'.<sup>183</sup> Murphy's first letter set the tone for his correspondence with Ware. His thirteenth letter, sent six years after he initially requested a boot brush among other items, asked Ware to 'send me five pounds' on its first page immediately following his opening greeting.<sup>184</sup> The three-page long letter seemingly served no further purpose; it began with his request for money before detailing the best way the sum

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<sup>182</sup> SHC 1487/153/2, 20 August 1857.

<sup>183</sup> SHC 1487/145/2, 11 June 1855.

<sup>184</sup> SHC 1487/145/13, 6 February 1861.

could be sent, and finally closed with the statement 'I wish I was able to do without it but never mind'.<sup>185</sup> Evidently, Ware sent the exact figure Murphy requested as he wrote in his next letter 'Dear Sir i receaved the five pounds you Sent me and i never forget your kindness towards me'.<sup>186</sup>

Murphy was not the only correspondent to request money; however, in most cases such requests were tentative and awkward. John Crawley's fourth letter reads: 'if we are hear at Chrismas there will be three Weeks leave given and if I have enough money coming to me I will come up I shall be very glad to hear from you Sir'. On an additional torn-off piece of paper clipped to the main letter either by Crawley or Ware upon receipt, he returned to the subject of visiting by politely suggesting 'Sir I should be very thankful to you If you could send me a little money to come up at Chrismas'.<sup>187</sup> This small scrap of paper is symptomatic of the awkwardness many former scholars felt when requesting monetary or material favours. Like Murphy, Alexander Patterson opened his second letter with his financial request. In this instance the commencement of the letter conveys a sense of immediacy and urgency of the part of its author, as he strove to explain his situation. The second line reads:

i hope it will not be any ofence to you in asking a favor of you to lend me a half a sovering to git some little things which is of great need to me as i am not able to get them till i get my advence and then i will pay you again because i do not know any Frend so great as you.<sup>188</sup>

In the body of his letter Patterson expanded on his dilemma, informing Ware that the ship he was supposed to board had sailed early and taken his luggage with it. Having managed to

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<sup>185</sup> SHC 1487/145/13, 6 February 1861.

<sup>186</sup> SHC 1487/145/14, 10 September [1861?].

<sup>187</sup> SHC 1487/128/4, 23 October 1861.

<sup>188</sup> SHC 1487/146/2, 9 March 1854.

purchase 'trowsers and shirts', he required money to buy 'some neatles and thread and paper ink soap and buttons'.<sup>189</sup>

As Howell argues, the presence of requests within letters demonstrates that those overseas felt able to pursue aid from the wealthy at home.<sup>190</sup> The instances explored above suggest that Ware continued to be a source of practical aid for former scholars in the manner that he had been when they lived in the community. The letters highlight that many former scholars utilised their ragged school contacts, ensuring they received the help available to them. Murphy's correspondence in particular demonstrate that former scholars were able to set the terms of their correspondence with those in England, although few did so boldly. Moreover, the fact that Murphy's letters form one half of the exchanges suggests that Ware did not rebut Murphy. Despite underlining Murphy's ultimatum in his initial letter, Ware fulfilled Murphy's requests and therefore participated in and legitimised the new context of their relationship.

### **'Oh I Wish I Could See Mr Ware': Developing Relationships Over Letter**

On Sunday 15 June 1862 Charles Restieaux wrote to Ware on black-edged mourning to notify him that his mother had died. In the sad letter he wrote:

I sorry am to tell you about my Mothers Death which happen on the 20 of May Last month and while i was on the Diggings no Letter came to me till the 30 of the same so that it was to Late for to and see the last of my Poor Mother.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> SHC 1487/146/2, 9 March 1854.

<sup>190</sup> Howells, p. 188.

<sup>191</sup> SHC 1487/153/18, 15 June 1862.

Below this he expressed his distress to his old school teacher, writing ‘Dear Mr Ware I dont Know what to do at times I am Lost’. The despairing impact of his mother’s death was communicated in Restieaux’s statement ‘I think to myself that the house Looks very Black and Dull I hardly like to go home again’.<sup>192</sup> He expanded further on his grief in his next letter, in which he briefly noted ‘When I heard the news about my Poor Mother’ he was unable to get out of bed for a week and ‘did not Like to go home and no Body in the house’.<sup>193</sup> When he next wrote to Ware on 10 March 1864 from his new home in Christchurch he expressed his affection and regard for his teacher, calling him ‘the only friend I have # in this World’.<sup>194</sup> Following the death of his mother, despite the presence of his brothers and sister in New Zealand, Charles Restieaux chose to confide in his former teacher in London.

The relationships former scholars had with Ware after leaving school were not necessarily static. Although many correspondents focused exclusively on the heritage of their relationship with Ware by focusing on previous interaction in their letters it was possible to continue and develop the connection. Correspondence was not solely based on past events, as demonstrated in Restieaux’s words above in which he confided in Ware about a very current problem. Such exchanges suggest that it was possible for the relationship between scholar and teacher to evolve and adapt to the new context within which they communicated.

Ware was addressed as ‘Dear friend’ at the commencement of a number of letters, yet, as already noted, it is possible to dismiss such occurrences as habit or mere writing practice. It is harder to disregard those instances in which correspondents expressed affection

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<sup>192</sup> SHC 1487/153/18, 15 June 1862.

<sup>193</sup> SHC 1487/153/25, 30 October 1863.

<sup>194</sup> SHC 1487/153/19, 10 March 1864.

within the body of their letters. After citing the circumstances of his first meeting with Ware related above, Charles Henley concluded ‘since then you have been my best friend’.<sup>195</sup> Similarly, Daniel Smith stated in reference to his teacher ‘i know i have not got a better friend in London’.<sup>196</sup> Both Henley’s and Smith’s words are grounded in the history of their relationship with Ware and the geographical context in which they knew him. Other correspondents stressed the current nature of their friendship with Ware, who was fulfilling a very present need. For instance Benjamin Elliot wrote that he had ‘lost my father about fifteen months and likewise my mother about nine months’, adding ‘I have no one to write to me or send me any papers but you sir’.<sup>197</sup> A comparable sense of loneliness is found in Michael Murphy’s eleventh letter that he sent while on board the H. M. S. *Renown*, docked in Naples in August 1860. In it he called Ware ‘the only Freind I have got’, a phrase that speaks both of his affection for Ware and of his own loneliness.<sup>198</sup> The striking similarity between Murphy’s words and those of Charles Restieaux upon his mother’s death, calling Ware ‘the only friend I have ~~it~~ in this World’, demonstrates the critical role Ware could play in the lives of former scholars and the value they could place upon him.

The most prominent indicators of affection or fondness are found in those instances in which former scholars wrote of their desires or plans to see him again. In October 1854 Alexander Patterson wrote from the Baltic ‘I hope I may be able to come and see you when we come home’, while ten years later Richard Harrier promised ‘next time I come home I will

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<sup>195</sup> SHC 1487/139/1, 3 October 1870.

<sup>196</sup> SHC 1487/159/7, 30 August 1860.

<sup>197</sup> SHC 1487/131/1, 12 January 1862.

<sup>198</sup> SHC 1487/145/11, 2 August 1860.

come and see you'.<sup>199</sup> In the same letter that spoke of his loneliness referred to above, Elliot wrote 'I have been away from you four years and three months and by the time I have been away five years and three months I shall be home then I shal com and see you'.<sup>200</sup> Yet, the letters of Edward Connor offer by far the most poignant example of such yearning. Edward and William Connor had been orphaned during their time at the school; Ware's journals detail the illness and subsequent death of their mother in St. Pancras workhouse in the summer of 1854.<sup>201</sup> During her confinement Ware noted that he met 'little W Connor in the street' and arranged for him to sleep at the dormitory, noting in his journal that the boy had been 'sleeping in passages, Dust holes, &c'.<sup>202</sup> Later, when in the navy, William sent a total of eight letters to Ware between October 1858 and May 1862. He evidently hoped to return to England as his seventh letter detailed his homesickness in his statement 'I have not heard from England not since your letter', later writing 'I should like to see England again'.<sup>203</sup> William's brother, Edward, wrote to Ware on 16 September 1862 in a letter headed 'At Sea', notifying Ware that his sibling had died. At the time of William's death the two brothers had been together on the H. M. S. *Semiranis* in the East Indies. Edward informed Ware that 'after being sick for 5 days my Brother died yesterday at about 3 o clock in my arms & off the Brain Fever the last sensible words he uttered were Oh I should like to see Mr Ware'.<sup>204</sup>

Words can only fail to evaluate the magnitude of William's dying words to his brother; they testify to the deep value he placed on his relationship with Ware that surpasses what is

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<sup>199</sup> SHC 1487/146/4, 1 October 1854, SHC 1487/135/1, 9 February 1864.

<sup>200</sup> SHC 1487/131/1, 12 January 1862.

<sup>201</sup> SHC 1585/3, 23 July 1854, 6 August 1854.

<sup>202</sup> SHC 1585/3, 23 June 1854.

<sup>203</sup> SHC 1487/127/7, 12 January 1862.

<sup>204</sup> SHC 1487/126/2, 16 September 1862.

expected between scholar and teacher. Ware's own response to this letter is evidenced in the fact that he made a note of it in his journal. On 1 November Ware wrote 'I have received this week a letter from Edward Conner informing me of the death of his brother William [...] He died of brain fever – his last sensible words were "Oh I wish I could see Mr Ware" – Peace be with him!'.<sup>205</sup> The significance of this news to Ware is demonstrated in the fact that this is the only instance in which he directly quoted the contents of a letter. For the most part only the correspondents' perception of the relationship is visible, yet in referencing William's dying words in his journal Ware gives a small insight into his own response. This succinct comment upon hearing the news of William's death suggests that Ware's relationship with Connor was marked by affect.

Just as Connor wished to see Ware, a considerable number of correspondents asked him to send his likeness. His cooperation and own initiative on this matter is likewise indicative of his regard for scholars. Buettner's research is helpful in understanding the value attached to photographs here. She writes that 'Of all the items enclosed within family letters, photographs of their writers had by far the greatest meaning'.<sup>206</sup> Further, she argues that images of loved ones could 'function as icons in their capacity as the closest physical manifestation of those far away. Photographs served not only as images that might underscore familiarity but also as tangible, fetishized, material substitutes for those who were absent'.<sup>207</sup> James Wright's letters demonstrate the value that could be placed on likenesses as he requested 'mr fowlers mr Haywood and your own likeneses' in his third letter, while his

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<sup>205</sup> SHC 1585/6, 1 November 1862.

<sup>206</sup> Buettner, p. 136.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

fourth noted 'I ham verry much obelighed to you for the news papper you sent me', before adding 'more so for the likenesses'.<sup>208</sup> Similarly, in his third letter, composed 18 July 1859, John Dowie wrote 'i shoud be very happy if you wood send your Lickins to me and i will tery to doe the same'.<sup>209</sup> His following letter, sent November 1859, thanked Ware for his likeness and expressed his gratitude writing 'I was very happy to think that you shoud be so kind as to send it to me'. He then noted 'I send you mine now', although whether this was in answer to a request from Ware is not stated.<sup>210</sup>

Again, Charles Restieaux's letters help provide a rich picture. After Ware sent Restieaux a portrait upon request he asked his former student for a likeness in return. In his tenth letter Restieaux reverberated Ware's own words, stating 'you say that if I send you my likeness that you hung it up in the room'. Restieaux then promised to send his likeness when he returned to Lyttelton.<sup>211</sup> After this, Restieaux's letters routinely referenced his intention to send his likeness. In his fourteenth letter he described his plan to send his own likeness along with those of two of his brothers with his sister, Mary Ann, upon her return to England.<sup>212</sup> Restieaux's next letter, dated 1 May 1861, detailed 'my sister is on her way' and informed Ware 'there will be a Box for you with some things in'. He then wrote apologetically 'Dont think me unkind in not sending my Likeness to you i have not had the meanes to' and swore to send it 'by the next Chance'.<sup>213</sup> Over three years later Restieaux's correspondence again provides a glimpse of Ware's words. He acknowledged receiving Ware's letter 'dated June

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<sup>208</sup> SHC 1486/167/3, 14 September 1864, SHC 1487/167/4, 21 February 186[5?].

<sup>209</sup> SHC 1487/129/3, 18 July 1859.

<sup>210</sup> SHC 1487/129/4, 27 November 1859.

<sup>211</sup> SHC 1487/153/10, 16 August [1860?].

<sup>212</sup> SHC 1487/153/14, 21 March 1861.

<sup>213</sup> SHC 1487/153/15, 1 May 1861.



22/64', echoing 'you say that you Would Like very much to see my Likeness'. Restieaux responded apologetically once again, writing 'Mr Ware you shall have it but now you cant for I am out of Work'.<sup>214</sup> Finally, in August 1865, Charles wrote from Christchurch 'I take up my pen to inform you that I have sent you a Portrait at Last and a friend of mine will Bring it to your Chambers'.<sup>215</sup> The last note from Restieaux that Ware preserved is that which arrived with his portrait. Upon a small piece of paper he hurriedly penned 'Alow me to Introduce you to a Intimate friend of mine. this Gentleman took my Portrait for me and Promises to Delever it for me to you'. Restieaux explained his rushed writing by noting that the gentleman in question would be leaving soon, before closing the correspondence with 'I Whish I Was With him'.<sup>216</sup> The ongoing saga of the likeness across Restieaux's letters highlights the reciprocity of their relationship as each party sought the other's portrait. Ware actively sought his former scholar's picture, as evidenced in Restieaux's echo of his words, and given the frequency with which Restieaux mentioned the matter it is possible that Ware was in the habit of reminding him of his initial promise.

Charles Restieaux's letters following his mother's death demonstrate the trust and confidence that could be placed in a ragged school teacher even after school. While he had been at school, Restieaux had spoken to Ware to inform him that his mother was 'in great distress' and, although several years had passed, he continued to seek emotional support from his teacher. Nevertheless, Restieaux was a particularly difficult scholar while at school. In January 1852, thirteen years before Restieaux sent his likeness, Ware recorded a confrontation

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<sup>214</sup> SHC 1487/153/23, 15 September 1864.

<sup>215</sup> SHC 1487/153/24. August 1865.

<sup>216</sup> SHC 1487/153/26, undated note.

between young Restieaux and Mr Ayton. He noted that Restieaux had been ‘as usual troublesome’ and Ayton had consequently struck him with a cane. Restieaux had ‘resisted & seized the cane’ and Ayton took him by the throat, slapped his face ‘and in so doing, made his nose bleed & gave him a black eye’.<sup>217</sup> Ware recorded three days later that he spoke with Ayton on the matter and ‘expressed my strong objection’, adding that other teachers had also ‘noticed the boy’s face & were annoyed about it’. In response Ayton told Ware that ‘he would in future turn them out instead of beating them’.<sup>218</sup> When Ware visited Restieaux at home he noted his mother was ‘much troubled after the affair with Ayton’, and he added his own thought that Ayton ‘was much to blame for losing his temper’.<sup>219</sup> Whether or not Restieaux had known Ware had taken his side rather than that of his colleague is debatable; nevertheless, a trusting relationship between scholar and teacher appears to have been formed. Restieaux’s correspondence with Ware, and the history it built on, demonstrates that in those cases where significant relationships were established in the context of the classroom they could continue and develop later on. Although little can be gleaned of Ware’s own regard for former scholars, his request for a likeness of Restieaux suggests a fondness. Finally, Ware’s last reference to Restieaux in his journal sheds more light on his feelings towards his protégée. When a young boy with the unusual surname ‘Restieaux’ appeared at the school in February 1866, Ware recorded ‘I could not trace any relationship to my old friends the Restieauxs’.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> SHC 1585/2, 19 January 1852.

<sup>218</sup> SHC 1585/2, 22 January 1852.

<sup>219</sup> SHC 1585/2, 1 February 1852.

<sup>220</sup> SHC 1585/7, 11 February 1866.

## Conclusion

The letters Ware received demonstrate the wide breadth of abilities found among ragged school scholars. Unlike the summaries of scholars' capacities found in the Field Lane casebook or the honed letters published in promotional literature, the letters Ware received reveal the script of former scholars. They give access to the handwriting, spelling, and language that correspondents employed in letters to teachers. The literacy levels suggested by the letters encompass extremes of aptitude; some, such as Frederick Henderson and Robert Restieaux, appear particularly accomplished, while others, such as John Dowie and William Eaton, struggled to articulate themselves. Further, the resourcefulness of those who employed pictures and sketches in place of words has been highlighted. Finally, the pride associated with literacy, as well as the shame attached to illiteracy, is demonstrated by those letter-writers who strove to improve. The value correspondents themselves invested in reading and writing signifies that there was a demand for education among poor children; education was not imposed, rather it was sought out.

Within the ragged school classroom unlikely relationships, and in some cases friendships, could be forged between scholars and teachers. In examining the letters former scholars wrote to their teacher it has been demonstrated that the connections made in the classroom did not necessarily cease when schooling finished. The letters Ware received together with his school journals show the continuity that could exist in the scholar-teacher relationship; for many emigrants Ware fulfilled a similar role over letter to that which he had while they were at school. The practical and emotional support correspondents sought from Ware often reflected that which he had provided previously.

The collection of letters former Compton Place scholars sent their teacher is

emblematic of the agency they exercised after their time at school. Given that it was usually the scholar who initiated contact, it was likewise the scholar who set the tone of the correspondence. In choosing how to address Ware and how to close their letter, former scholars framed letters in the manner they felt appropriate. Letters not only allowed relationships to endure despite distance, but enabled them to develop. The salutations and valedictions used have proved helpful in charting the gradual changes found in correspondences. Further, those letters that address Ware with affection or suggest mutuality within the relationship, signify the levelling effect letters could have.

References to God and notes of thanksgiving are found in the majority of the letters. Like the emigrant letters ragged school promotional material featured, God was not forgotten when Compton Place scholars left their homeland. Excerpts from ragged school children's literature are found, re-appropriated, in the letters they later sent Ware. Teachings from the classroom were recited over letter, as for instance in Henley's note that 'easter Sunday was a day of Rest that we all know'.<sup>221</sup> In the same way that correspondents sought Ware's approval of their writing, they likewise sought his approval of their spirituality by reciting their Christian knowledge and habits. Yet the faith of correspondents was not relegated to memory, as many letter-writers referred to the courage or peace their Biblical knowledge had granted them in times of particular hardship.

Finally, the correspondence analysed in this chapter has provided insight into the distress and loneliness that frequently awaited those leaving British shores. Those correspondents who reminded Ware to respond, sought reasons to explain silence, or

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<sup>221</sup> SHC 1487/164/8, 21 August 1862.

articulated their fear of being forgotten suggest the vulnerability emigrants could feel. In particular, the continued attachment many letter-writers expressed regarding their homeland and the value they placed on British newspapers has been shown – with figures such as Ware playing a crucial role in sending newspapers to those overseas. More than this, in sharing news from the school and passing on greetings to and from other teachers, those overseas continued to be connected to and a part of the Compton Place community.

## **‘Here Ends This Season’: Conclusions**

While being a close history of Compton Place and the relationships formed between local boys and the school’s superintendent, this thesis is simultaneously a history of child poverty, of changing ideas about children’s educational rights, of philanthropic action and the cross-class relationships formed, of religious education and children’s responses to it, as well as the experiences of working-class British emigrants in the mid- and late nineteenth century. These broader topics are refracted through the exchanges between Ware and his scholars, both the humdrum and the exceptional. Common threads have run throughout each chapter; the diversity of children’s experiences, their resourcefulness in seeking aid, the complexity of relationships formed between children and teachers, and, ultimately, the value of juvenile testimonies.

These focal points jar with histories that place an emphasis upon promotional literature, thereby limiting access to the lived experiences of both scholars and teachers. This source base culminates in evaluations that silence children’s voices; in the same way that child-savers are critiqued for imposing ideas upon poor children, poor children are again confined within the well-worn tropes of innocence, passivity, and victimhood. In contrast, this thesis has uncovered the dialogue between scholars and teachers and underscored the children’s part within the conversation. The negotiations that took place in the classroom, and later over letter, bring into question the notion that ragged schools and, by extension other child-saving groups, acted as instruments of middle-class control.

Within ragged school classrooms various worlds collided. Impoverished and wealthy, children and adults gathered together. Denominational divisions were seemingly set aside in the hope of realising a broader Christian mission; in leaving sectarian issues outside the

schoolroom the ragged school movement optimised support and avoided the in-fighting that contemporaneously plagued other educational institutions. The class divide was not solely between children and teachers; the notion of the middle-class child-saver that is described by Platt does not reflect the multiplicity of teachers that contributed to ragged schools in practice.<sup>1</sup> Artisanal workers, such as shoemakers and carpenters, brought important skills to the schools and were valued in their ability to bridge the cultural gap that supposedly separated the children from wealthier teachers. It was not only between children and adults that cross-class relationships were formed, as the schools promoted dialogue between barristers and shoemakers, surgeons and envelope-folders. Similarly, the critical contribution women made to the movement has been quantitatively and qualitatively demonstrated. Either alongside a husband, in the company of children, or seemingly alone, ragged schools offered women a respectable place outside of the home where they could make a wide circle of acquaintances while contributing philanthropically to their community. In this regard, the ragged school classroom presented opportunities to adults as well as to children.

More generally, the significant role the ragged school movement deserves within histories of education has been shown. Despite the contrary claims of Clark, this thesis has demonstrated that there was significant cohesion across the schools in England and Scotland.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of literature from Carpenter, Guthrie, and Watson, as well as the LRSU's publication of the *RSUM* and the *OCM*, fostered a shared print culture that ensured a broad audience for ideas. Equally, the migration of teachers and supporters facilitated the growth of local schools as experiences and knowledge could be adapted to new contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> Platt, *The Child Savers*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', pp. 8-9.

Although scholarship on education highlights the contentious nature of writing with regards to poor children, both reading and writing were aspired by the central LRSU. As the Field Lane casebook testifies, the children's literacy skills covered a wide breadth. In succinctly recording children's literacy levels with phrases such as 'Reads and writes well', the casebook suggests the wide range of abilities found within one institution.

The letters from former Compton Place boys have made it possible to evaluate the literacy skills acquired in a ragged school from closer at hand – handling the actual correspondence they composed, rather than relying on an adult's assessment of their abilities. The letters give access to the words, script, spelling, and even sketches of correspondents, providing a more comprehensive picture of the educational value of the movement than has been previously ascertained. Moreover, they enable literacy to be regarded from a different perspective, highlighting the value placed on reading and writing by the scholars themselves. Both Cunningham and Laqueur have argued that education was sought out by working-class parents on behalf of their children; this thesis has shown that it was not only parents that sought out education – many children themselves desired to improve their reading and writing.<sup>3</sup> The letters reveal the pride and embarrassment that could be attached to penmanship, as well as the emotional angst poor literacy could cause emigrants by limiting their communication with loved ones at home. The Christian content of the letters has allowed the impact of ragged school religious teaching to be explored. References to Scriptural knowledge and church attendance, details which Ware would 'be glad to hear', indicate that former scholars sought his approval of their spiritual lives. More than this,

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<sup>3</sup> Laqueur, p. 148, Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, pp. 104-105.



however, the support that faith could grant is revealed in the many letters which reference the powerfulness of God's peace, even in the most desperate circumstances. The children's testimonies used throughout this thesis have facilitated an insight into their diverse experiences of and responses to poverty. In stark contrast to the whimsical figure of the street-child that is the legacy of Dorothy Tennant's ragamuffin sketches, the deep upset that poverty caused children has been stressed. Shame and self-consciousness, fear and worry could each be a direct consequence of the children's socioeconomic status. Further, the lasting damage poverty could inflict on children's bodies, either through accidents, disease, or by aggravating congenital conditions, was underscored. In drawing attention to the ragged school movement's heritage of aiding physically or mentally disabled children, this thesis has contributed to emerging scholarship on the history of disability by exploring the close ties between social standing and health in the mid-nineteenth century.

Although such suffering invites interpretations of the children as passive victims, if not of middle-class child-savers then of circumstance, this thesis has shown that poor children played an active role in seeking aid; they were, to re-appropriate Dickens's phrase in *David Copperfield*, "heroes of their own lives". Chapter two suggested that many poor children were aware of the shocking affect their appearance had on the middle class and utilised this to their advantage, while chapter five demonstrated how former scholars continued to seek aid from Ware. In analysing the letters Ware received it was revealed that former scholars sought both material and emotional support from their old teacher. Letter-writing provided a space where former scholars could bargain and negotiate with Ware; correspondents could, in some respects, set the terms of the epistolary exchanges. Some letter-writers were tentative when requesting items while others, such as Michael Murphy, were more forthright in their

requests.

The relationships between poor scholars and their teachers were as diverse as the individuals involved. Both adversarial and affectionate relationships were formed; the classroom could be a site of confrontation or of comfort. This thesis has shown that interpretations that cast the child as subject and adult as actor not only attribute too little agency to scholars, but too much agency to teachers. The manner in which the authority of teachers was undermined, or denied altogether, was explored in chapter three. It was argued that street-culture was frequently smuggled into the classroom and used as a means to simultaneously exclude teachers and entertain classmates. In this regard ragged school scholars frequently directed proceedings, again contradicting notions both about the teacher's control and the scholar's passivity. Further, chapter three demonstrated that both ragged school advice in the *RSUM*'s 'Teachers' Column' and accounts from local schools suggest teachers sought to appease children, as the desire for their return shaped their treatment in the classroom. Accordingly, lessons were planned with the aim of garnering the children's interests, while success was evaluated on the basis of the children's responses. Such findings highlight the value placed on the children's experiences within the schools. Further, it was shown with reference to both ragged school literature and cases cited in school records that the Lockean theory of *tabula rasa* frequently influenced the interpretations of bad behaviour. Teachers were held accountable for the poor behaviour of scholars as harsh discipline or uninteresting classes were cited as the root of disruption. In the same way that environmentalist ideas about childhood placed blame upon parents for their children's delinquency, blame was later redirected towards teachers.

In concentrating upon the voices of ragged school scholars, this thesis has

simultaneously shown the importance of acknowledging the voices of teachers. The classroom was ultimately a site of dialogue and therefore to concentrate upon one party to the exclusion of the other inevitably confines the analysis to an incomplete conversation, to one party's words at the expense of another's. The challenges teachers faced inside and outside the classroom deserve acknowledgement; both physical and verbal abuse from scholars and parents has been uncovered throughout this research. As well as this, however, the possible significance of ragged school teachers within local communities has also been realised. Ware's journals testify to the protective and supportive role he played, whether identifying neglect or sexual abuse, providing monetary or material aid during difficult periods, or listening to and comforting those in distress. Yet, the respect attached to the ragged school teacher's position made it possible for the trust invested in teachers to be exploited. This has been demonstrated in the cases of embezzlement at Field Lane discovered during this research, which highlight how the schools and their supporters could be taken advantage of. Further, Ware's entries regarding Mr Weeks underscored the potential danger that teachers could pose to scholars.

\*

On Sunday, 21 July 1867 1 Timothy 6 was the evening New Testament reading in Anglican Churches following the liturgical order. Those present in services across the country listened to Paul's instructions to Timothy to seek 'righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness', and to 'Fight the good fight of the faith'. The wealthy were encouraged to 'to be

rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share'.<sup>4</sup> The same day Martin Ware wrote his final entry in his school journal: 'Here ends this Season. I am to be married this Tuesday'. The closing three words, written in smudged Greek and condensed to fit upon this last page, read 'Glory to God'.<sup>5</sup> But, this was not the end. The following Tuesday, after Ware and his 'dear Mary V. Williams' exchanged vows in Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, boys from the ragged school showered the happy couple with posies.<sup>6</sup> Three years later, in October 1870, the same year that the Education Act was passed in England and Wales, Charles Henley put pen to paper in a letter to his former teacher. Six years earlier, on 29 May 1864, Ware noted after visiting Henley that he 'strikes me as being remarkably intelligent and thoughtful – fond of reading & makes original remarks'.<sup>7</sup> Just over a month later Ware recorded that he had 'found Henley in the streets and took him to the Ind School'.<sup>8</sup> After Henley was discovered 'making off' with a teacher's watch, Ware remarked that 'He is a very clever boy & will either turn out a very good or a very bad man'.<sup>9</sup> Henley's letter, sent three years after Ware left his post at Compton Place, is indicative of the enduring nature of ragged school relationships. Already briefly referenced in the previous chapter, it is shown in full below:

Mr Ware,  
Dear Sir

Having learnt your address and your assurance ['of goodwill' later inserted here] from Mr Owen I hasten to have this opportunity of addressing you. Perhaps you might think I am ungratefull. (But although my actions belie my sentiments) this is far from the case I have often thought of you but I could not muster sufficient

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<sup>4</sup> *The British Almanac of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, for the Year of our Lord 1867* (London: Knight and Co., 1868), p. 26. 1 Timothy 6.11-12, 18.

<sup>5</sup> SHC 1585/7, 21 July 1867.

<sup>6</sup> SHC 1487/107/1, pp. 44-45.

<sup>7</sup> SHC 1585/7, 29 May 1864.

<sup>8</sup> SHC 1585/7, 2 August 1864.

<sup>9</sup> SHC 1585/7, 30 March 1865.

courage to write. I have been enlisted twelve months yesterday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October.

My object in writing is to thank you for all the kindness you have shown me.

When I left the Shoebblack Brigade I wandered about penniless & hungry. You met me at the bottom of Grays Inn Rd & took me to the St. Pancras Industrial School. Since then you have been my best Friend and I shall never be able to repay your goodness. I must conclude trusting you are quite well I Remain Dear Sir

Yours Obd

Charles Henley.

Please write if only two lines. I will have more time to tell a little of my life as a Soldier in my next.<sup>10</sup>

Henley's next letter, if ever it existed, was not preserved. His final line is a fitting cliff-hanger, potentially representing his continuing relationship with Ware, if only in his memory. The sense of incompleteness here is suggestive of the fragmentary nature of this history. Just as 51 Russell Square, the building in which Ware kept and up kept his journals, no longer exists, we are left to piece together what remains of an incomplete and lost history. Yet, Ware's journals and the letters he received thankfully outlived his home. We are fortunate to have learned so much of Henley's story; there are many others who never wrote or who harked from schools for which there are no surviving records and whose words are consequently unattainable. Even for those, like Charles Restieaux, that received extensive coverage in Ware's journals and maintained a substantial correspondence with him later, there are facets of the relationships between scholar and teacher that remain hidden from the researcher: lost pages, misplaced letters after others failed to return them, unarticulated words, and sudden, abrupt endings. As Koven found, it has 'proved much more elusive to reconstruct and analyze cross-class benevolence and social welfare *in* and *as* a dynamic negotiated relationship

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<sup>10</sup> SHC 1487/139/1, 3 October 1870.

between two individuals'.<sup>11</sup> The intimate and changing relationships formed in Compton Place have proven the most complex and intangible components of this thesis; however, it is this part of the analysis that has been the most revelatory and rewarding.

Through the documents Ware preserved it has been possible to capture something of the relationships that existed in Compton Place. Together Ware's journals and the letters he received present the precious fragments of the dialogue between scholar and teacher, in stark contrast with Clark's assertion that historians of the ragged schools are 'inevitably shut out from the more personal aspects of the spiritual life of teachers and taught'.<sup>12</sup> The dynamics between scholars and teachers have been intimately explored by placing Compton Place at the heart of this thesis. The decision to use a microhistory approach was not taken lightly, particularly as my original intention had been a broad history of the ragged school movement and its impact on poor children. Upon encountering the richness of the Compton Place material and realising the rare opportunity it presented to engage with the dialogue between one teacher and his scholars, it seemed no other methodological approach was appropriate. This thesis testifies to the possibilities that microhistory presents to historians. It has facilitated more than a dry history of an institution; rather, it has enabled a history of the lives that were shaped there, both those of children and of adults.

As a researcher, I have been immersed within the school community that Ware's journals invite their reader into. This has inevitably entailed grappling with the challenges of studying real people and real lives; the poverty and anguish so often related by Ware is tangible and nearby. During the transcription process I felt a keen sympathy for those who, like Ware,

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<sup>11</sup> Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, 'The Ragged School Union', p. 291.

witnessed such suffering, as well as for those who lived through it. Moreover, in engaging with Ware's script I quickly came to recognise his dark humour, his expressive punctuation, and the discrete, marginal markers of his own feelings. The sense of responsibility when transcribing both Ware's journals and the letters of former scholars was unshakeable and I came to regard myself as a custodian of the Compton Place boys as well as of their teacher. The sources available altered my intentions, expanding my hopes beyond presenting a history of the ragged school movement. Rather, I have sought to relate the voices of scholars and to accurately and sensitively trace their experiences.

The same journals that related Weeks's shameful dismissal from Compton Place likewise provide rare insight into the affective nature of relationships possible between scholars and teachers. Ware is patently not representative of all ragged school teachers. At best his journals betray the daily emotions and thoughts of one quite exceptional teacher, demonstrating the interactions facilitated by the movement. At the same time, the overarching narrative of God's faithfulness provides another dynamic to Ware's journals, underscoring their devotional and personal character. His prayers and exclamations to his Lord attest to the fact that their author interpreted happenings, whether positive or negative, in the light of his Christian beliefs. Moreover, the challenges Ware faced over seventeen consecutive years at Compton Place are charted through his journals. His struggle to determine whether children could be trusted, his intense disappointment when scholars stole, or, more seriously, the grief found in those entries accompanied by a marginal note of 'R. I. P.', give unprecedented insight into Ware's experiences as a ragged school teacher. The breadth of Ware's journals evidences the evolving opinions of their author, demonstrating how his initial impressions of particular children could be tempered through his engagement

with them. More than this, Ware's journals have captured the words and actions of Compton Place scholars that would otherwise be lost. Sucksmith's bargaining with the hospital Matron to allow him to return to the school in exchange for him lying "quiet all night" and Brian's distressed cries in his sleep of "Why don't you tell me how Mrs Ward is?" are preserved because Ware chose to record them.<sup>13</sup>

The children's voices and their interpretations of the scholar-teacher relationship are most palpably accessed through the letters they later sent. The sizable collection shows the variety of relationships formed between one teacher and his scholars; their content as well as the varying number that correspondents sent is evocative of the different experiences of their authors. Each letter, regardless of size or substance, is symptomatic of the correspondent's desire to contact Ware. Letter-writing gave scholars the ability to define the relationship; the assortment of valedictions and signatures demonstrate the different interpretations and aspirations correspondents had of and for their relationship with their teacher. Letters not only enabled relationships between scholar and teacher to be retained, but to develop. The critical role Ware played in linking emigrants to their homeland is demonstrated in references to and requests for newspapers, while messages intended for others highlight the ways in which Ware connected former scholars to the ongoing Compton Place community.

Together the journals and letters have facilitated a wide perspective of ragged school relationships. In tracing interaction from its inception within the classroom to the long-distance exchanges that took place in later years, this thesis has provided a valuable and innovative contribution to debate on child-saving movements. Because of the history Ware's

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<sup>13</sup> SHC 1585/1, 29 July 1851, SHC 1585/5, 8 January 1858.



journals provide, it has been possible to show how classroom interactions were replicated and built upon over correspondence. Just as Ware had provided reading material or emotional comfort in school, he continued to fulfil this role in later years. As well as this, it has been possible to witness how relationships changed over time and it has been demonstrated that even troublesome scholars went on to express their gratitude, and even affection, for Ware. Similarly, Ware went on to imply, if not to express, his affection also. The lengthy saga regarding the sending of a portrait 'likeness' of Charles Restieaux, who had previously 'behaved very badly' and been 'very insolent' when at the school, demonstrates how relationships between scholars and teachers could grow and develop over time, building on memories and developing new ones.

The approach taken in this thesis, however, has limitations that could be addressed by future research. Ware's role as the superintendent of the boys' school has restricted access to the experiences of girls. The exceptional nature of the Compton Place sources means it is unlikely that similar data relating to girls has been preserved; however, a close reading of references to girls within committee minutes and annual reports could allow greater understanding of the different challenges they faced within ragged schools. The Compton Place sources could be mined further in future projects; the peer relationships that were established in the classroom and parental responses to Ware are both lines of inquiry that would likely prove fruitful. More generally, a significant contribution could be made to the field of ecclesiastical history through a focused study of the religious aspects of the schools. The experiences of Roman Catholic children within the institutions warrant particular attention, and could potentially shed light on emerging debates surrounding juvenile rights and the family unit.

In shifting the focus from the narratives of child-savers to the daily dialogue between one teacher and his scholars this thesis has given space to testimonies from the ragged school classroom. While listening to the children's voices an overriding chorus has sounded, one that speaks of the value that one small institution, and its meticulous superintendent, played in the lives of its scholars.



## Appendix A: Photographs and Pictures

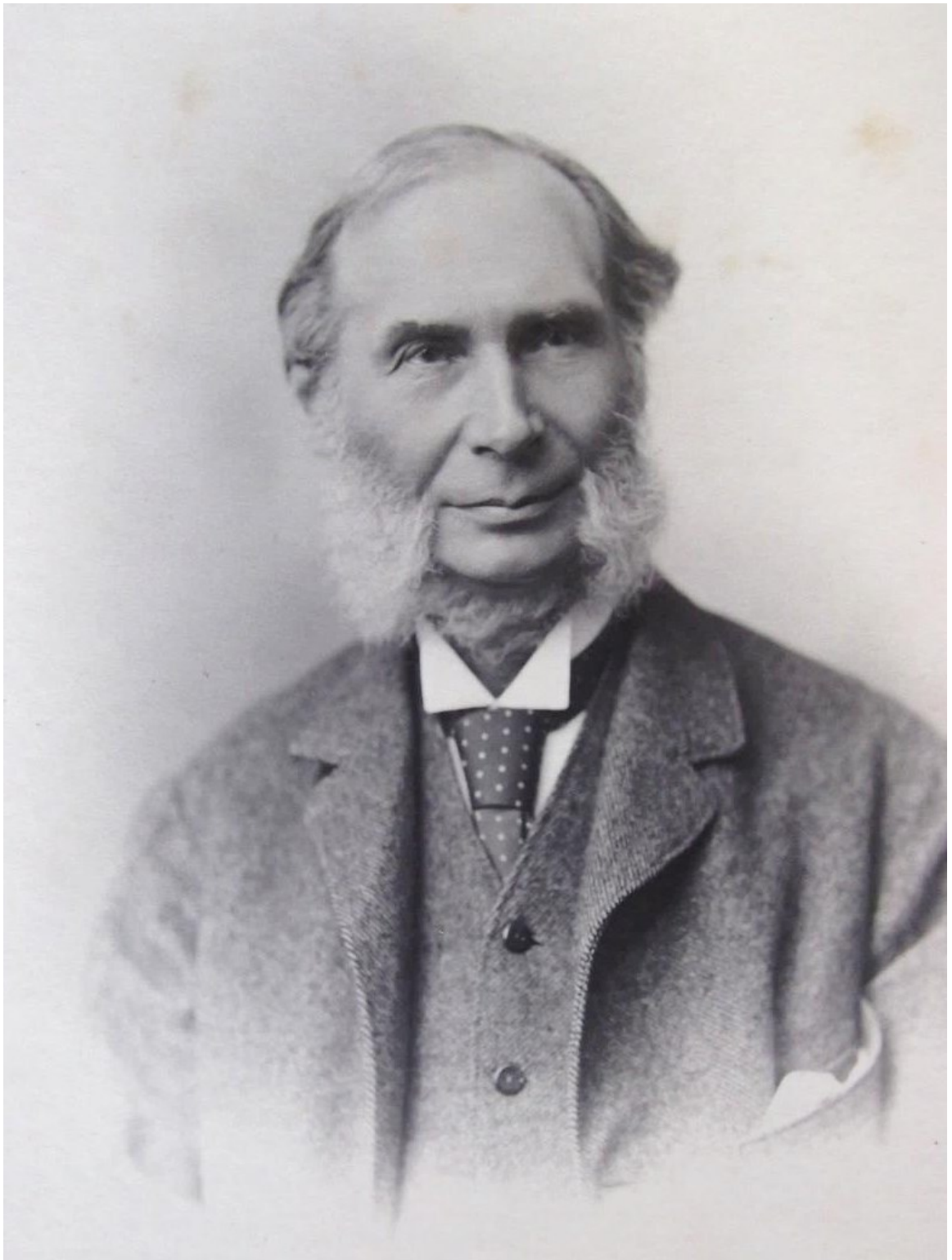


Figure 1 Photograph of Martin Ware III, SHC 1487/115/5.



Figure 2 This photograph of boys in their RSSBS uniforms was enclosed among Thomas Ramsay's letters. It is possible that it depicts Ramsay and Frederick Henderson. SHC 1487/178/4.



Figure 3 'Candour', *Punch*, 27 October 1860. The text reads: "Well my little man, what do you want!"  
"Wot do I want!- Vy, Guv'nor, I think I wants Heverything!"



Figure 4 'The Crossing-Sweeper Nuisance', *Punch*, 26 January 1856, p. 34.

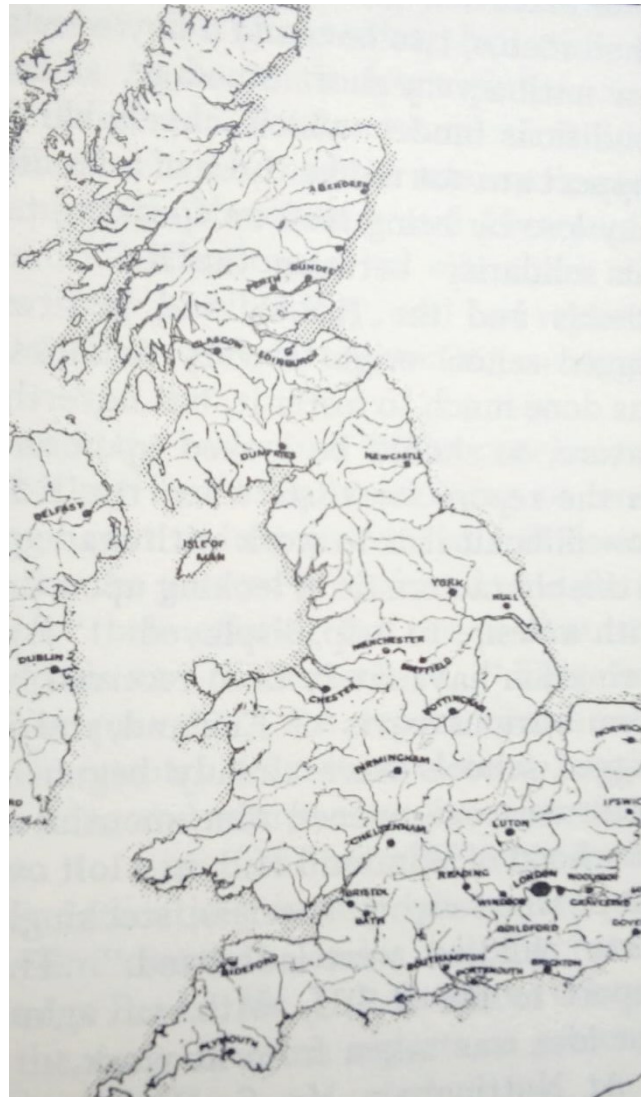


Figure 5 Map of ragged schools featured in Charles Montague's *Sixty Years in Waifdom*, p. 211.





Figure 6 A 'before' photograph of a boy resident in the Field Lane refuge. LMA CLC/225/MS/05754A.



Figure 7 William Ward's injured right hand is prominently displayed, perhaps intentionally.  
LMA CLC/225/MS/06754A.



Figure 8 John Farrell, who was described as 'depressed both physically and mentally'.  
LMA/CLC/225/MS/05754A.

with a furnished table. This I did.  
 Paterson said it was true - that Mr.  
 P. had done so 2 or 3 months ago to  
 him when he was ill in bed.  
 & afterwards at his own home, where  
 he took him into a room by  
 himself & took liberties with him.  
 I advised Shepley to write to  
 Mr. P. & ask him to come to the  
 Soc<sup>y</sup> & see about it. This he did  
 & I believe made Holgate retract  
 & apologise before the ~~other~~  
 but Paterson was not present  
 being still unwell.  
 This afternoon after school I  
 asked Paterson about it & ~~he~~  
 said whether it was true but  
 Holgate had confessed that it  
 was a lie - Paterson still maintained  
 that it was true & said "Holgate  
 told me that he did not want  
 to let Mr. <sup>T.</sup> ~~show~~ show who  
 & he wished he had said  
 nothing about it." I asked whether  
 he <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>meant</sup> to deny it if Mr. T. called upon him. He said  
 No, he meant to speak the truth.  
 Now Wiley has left his place and has been trying to get into  
 the Navy but is not quite old enough -

Figure 9 Ware's entry showing his extensive crossing-out of the accused.  
 SHC 1585/6, 21 January 1864.



1857  
other disease in the bladder; which  
I know he had suffered from since  
he was a child. I feel immeasurably  
shocked for I fear he was a very bad  
boy. And yet what opportunities  
he had! He had <sup>been</sup> connected with  
our school off and on for several  
years and seemed attached to us;  
but was always most unmanageable  
<sup>and often</sup> full of ~~the~~ vicious habits: ~~that the world~~. I think  
his age was about 15. We must  
draw the veil over him and leave  
him to the mercy of God.  
Yesterday I saw Tom Kleeve Kleeve  
He is still with the freemen  
in Bedford Street & seems to be  
doing well.

Figure 10 Ware's journal entry on 22 November 1857 is shown above as an example of Ware's ad-hoc and undrafted writing.  
SHC 1585/5, 22 November 1857.

1862  
 Dec. 7 Sunday. I had two other new  
 Teachers - Ranyard & Killeeney.  
 I thought let the name of the English  
 than I otherwise should. & the school  
 was therefore troublesome.  
 Mrs. Jellison has left his father again. Kate  
 & come to Mr. Weeks - Her name (Catherine)  
 he says is that his brothers were  
 always fighting -  
 9 Tuesday went to school and Archie  
 spoke to me & told me that Mr. Weeks  
 had several times come into the bedroom  
 and behaved indecently to him - &  
 also to Dan: Carey, Martin & Myant.  
 - that a few days ago he had done so  
 & Mr. Weeks had caught him &  
 driven him down stairs calling him a  
 "dirty heart &c"  
 The same day Mr. Fordham & Shinn came  
 to me & Shinn told me that he had met  
 Weeks in the street almost distracted -  
 having heard that Archie had been speaking  
 to me. He told <sup>him</sup> ~~me~~ that he had taken  
 some ale & also some wine last Friday  
 (I think) & had been overcome by it - that

Figure 11 Ware's entry on 9 December 1864. Note his more compact writing, conveying a sense of preciseness and urgency, and his mistaken use of 'me'. SHC 1585/7, 9 December 1864.



March 1859

Dear Sir

I am very sorry I  
have been so long  
before I wrote to  
you but I hope  
you will be so good  
as to excuse me.  
I like Windsor  
very much and  
we are going  
to leave  
Windsor

Figure 12 Letter from William Proctor to Ware. Proctor's script is one of the more infantile found in the correspondence. It highlights the effort invested in corresponding by those with poor literacy.  
SHC 1487/148/1, March 1859.

Whincher street Lyttelton Jan 16/80

My Dear Mr Ware

I take my pen to write to you again and I well still  
 I write to you now to ask you how you are I hope you are  
 just well and in good health as it leaves me at present  
 and all of us I sent you a letter last month and I sent  
 Mr Charles one this month. I have not heard from Mr  
 Herbert nor Mr. Hatten since I wrote to them. we have  
 had some very fine days just now. Mr Ware I am even  
 sorry to tell you that the young men that I told you  
 in my last letter they left after being together about 2  
 years. but there is a young man working with me and his brother  
 there is traveller for Mr Charles his name is young Mr Ware you  
 said that I don't improve in my writing but I am trying to by  
 keeping a Journal of what I do in the day. trade is stirring  
 again there is a dying outbreak in our settlement and there

Figure 13 Charles Restieaux's fourth letter, demonstrating his carefully spaced lines.  
 SHC 1487/153/4, 16 January [?].



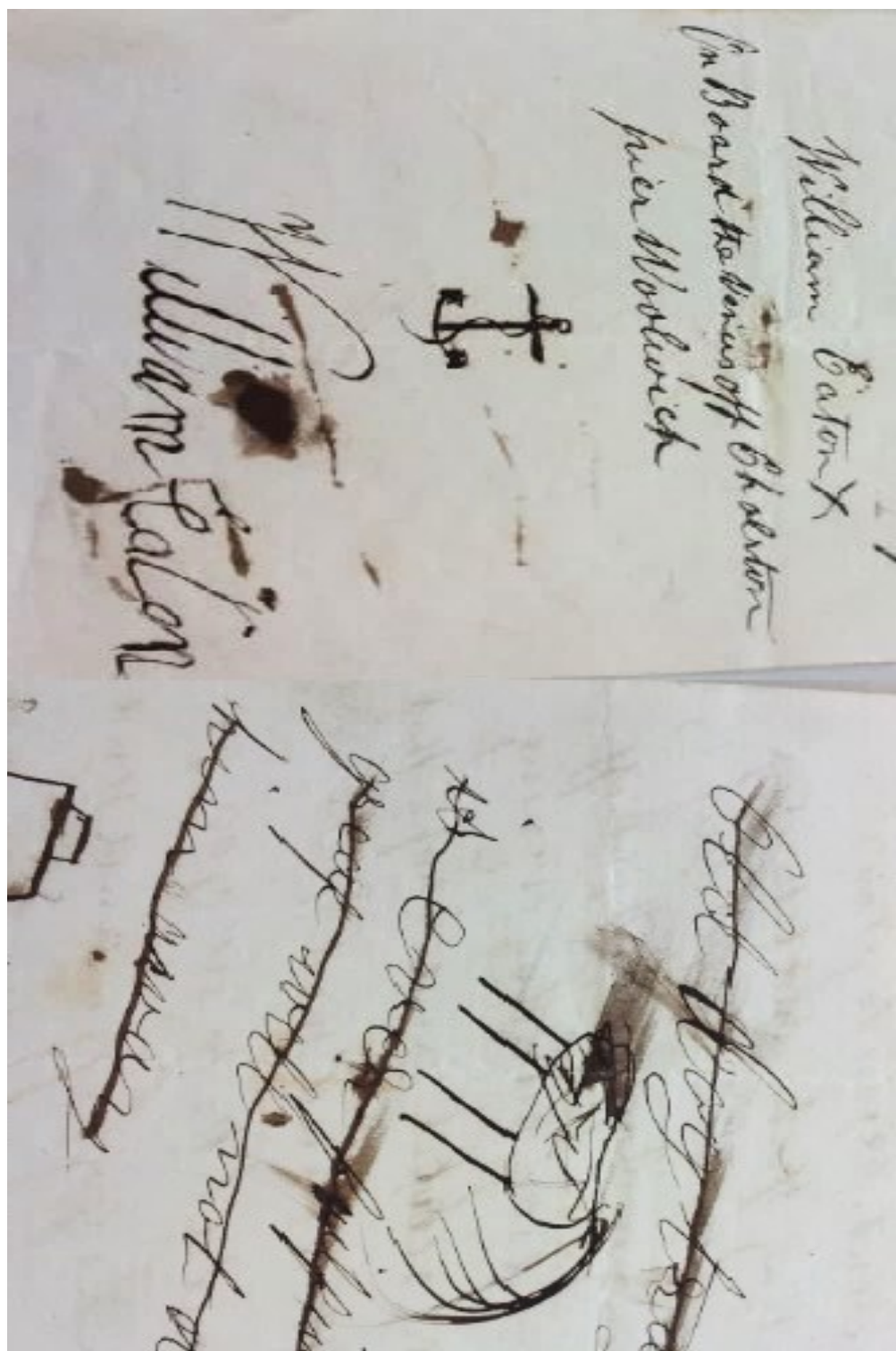


Figure 14 William Eaton's first letter, featuring signature, anchor, sketch and crossed out lyrics.  
SHC 1487/130/1, 11 February 1858.

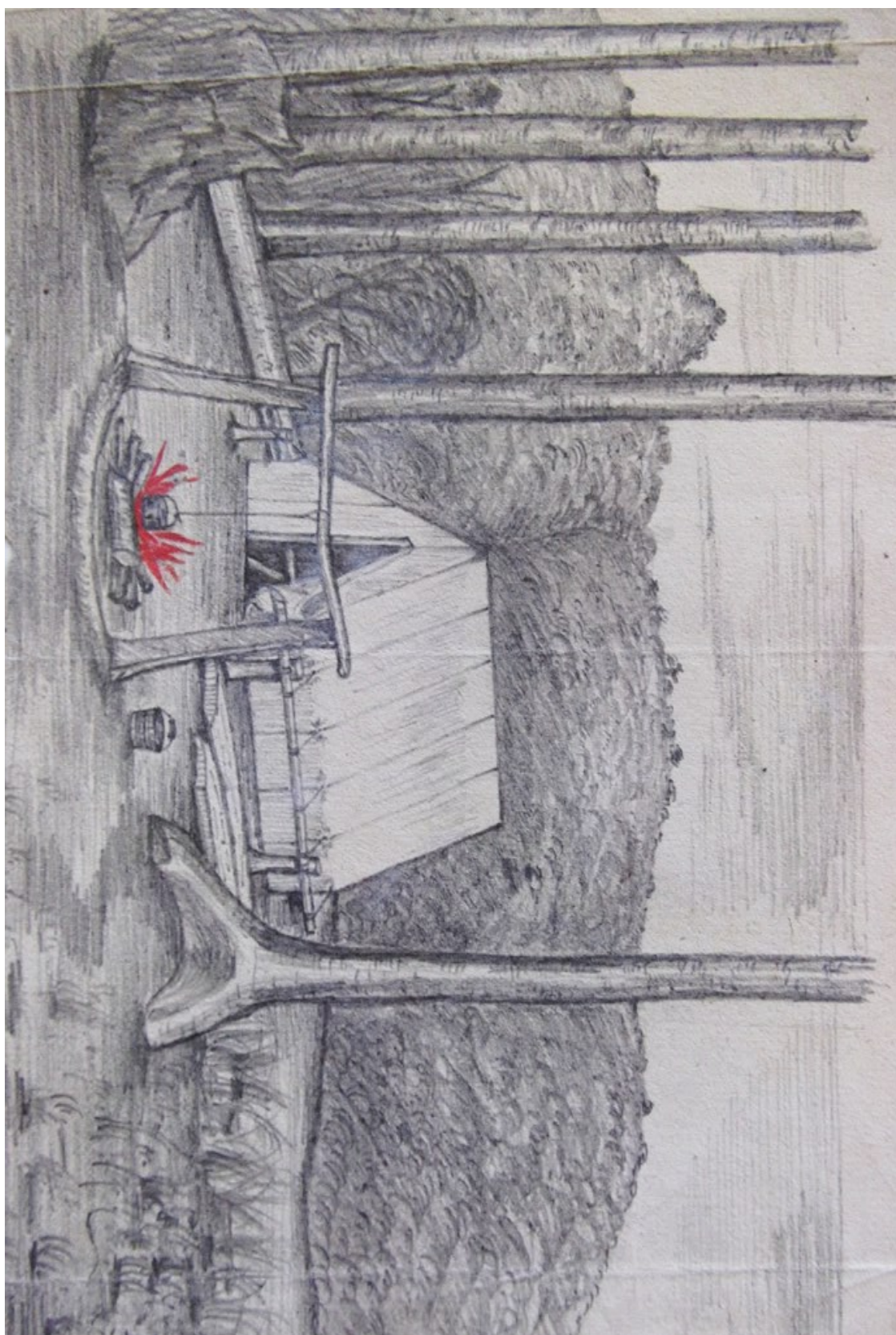


Figure 15 Charles Restieaux's sketch of 'the plase in which we his', New Zealand.  
SHC 1487/154/1, 12 January 1860.



as it is some time since I have  
had a letter from home, it is  
about 11 months since I had heard  
from any one and I would very  
much like to hear from you  
if it would not be any trouble  
to you Give my respects to all  
the gentleman in the society  
to Mr. & Mrs. Howard and  
all enquiring friends. We are  
laying at Napau now it is a  
great place from Blockade  
running but it is all over now  
please to write by return of post  
I have no more to say at present  
but I remain  
Your affectionate  
humble & obedient servant  
R. T. Warner.

Figure 16 The valediction in Richard Warner's third letter, showing his striking out of 'affectionate'.  
SHC 1487/161/3, 23 June 1865.

## Appendix B: Graphs and Charts

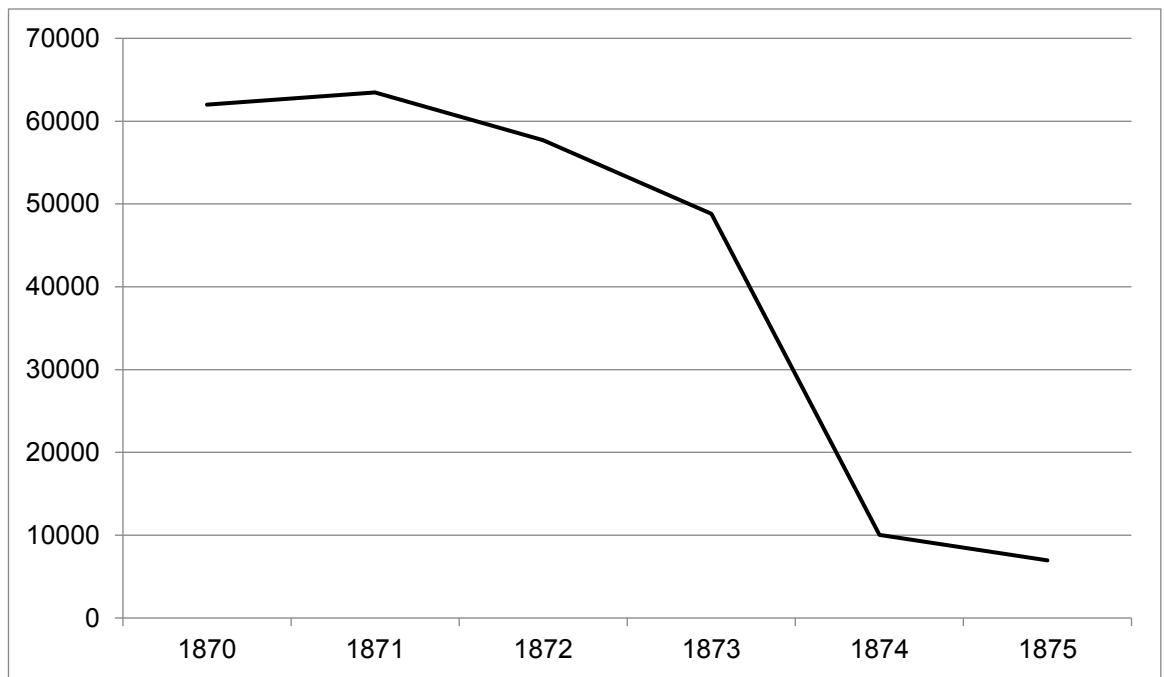


Figure 1 Total average number of scholars attending weekday, weeknight, and Sunday schools as stated in LRSU annual reports.

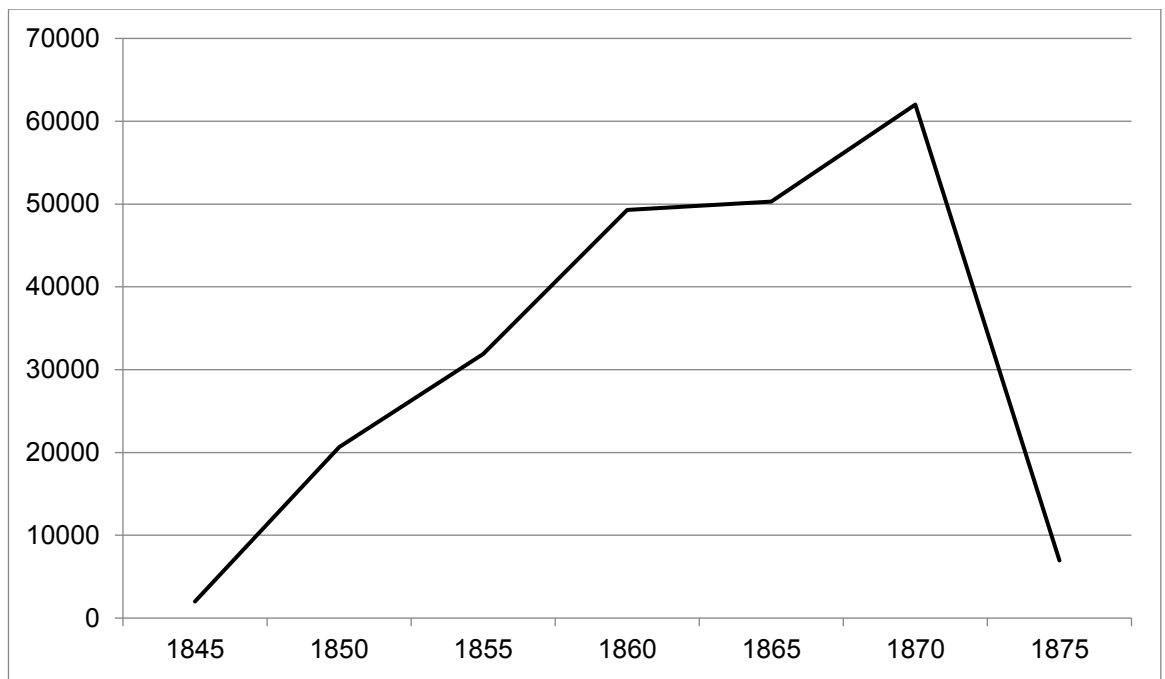


Figure 2 Total average number of scholars attending weekday, weeknight, and Sunday schools as stated in LRSU annual reports.

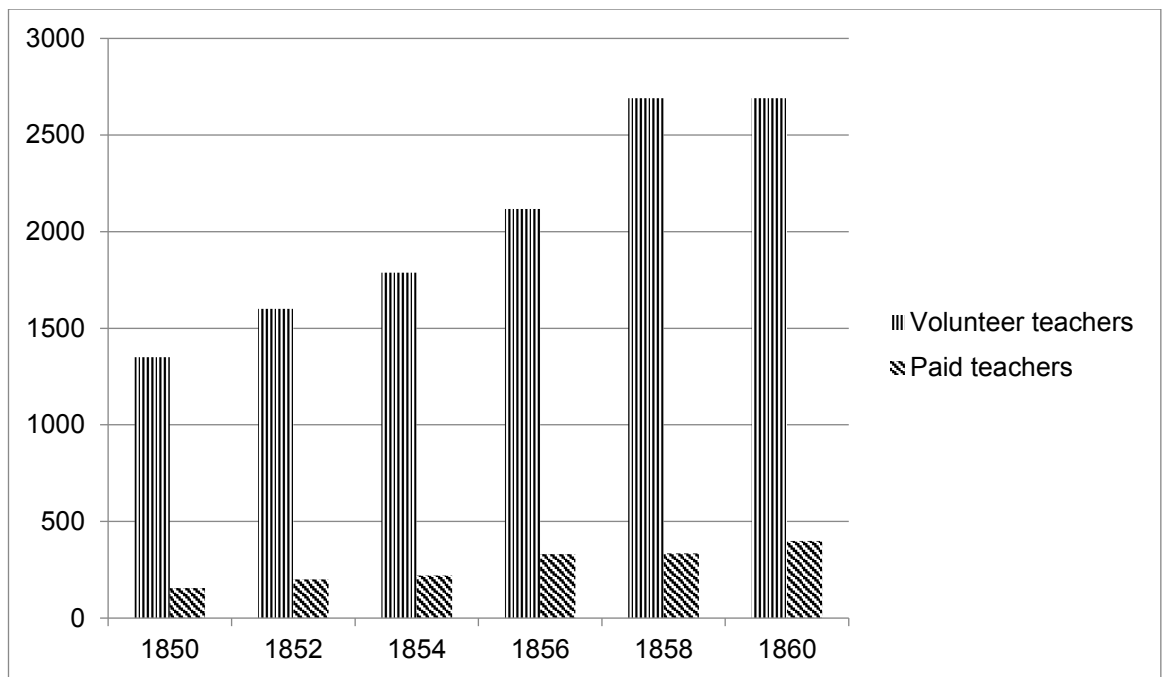


Figure 3 Number of volunteer and paid teachers between 1850 and 1860 as stated in LRSU annual reports.



## Appendix C: Texts

Frederick Henderson's poem was used in the Victoria & Albert Museum of Childhood's exhibition on the experiences of child migrants, *On Their Own*, which was open to the public between October 2015 and June 2016. The original letter was on display along with the below transcription. The poem was set to music and performed by Belinda Hooley and Heidi Tidlow and entitled 'Why Did I Leave Thee?'. The resulting song was featured on an album produced for the exhibition entitled *Ballads of Child Migration*.

[In Ware's hand] 'Lines by Frederick Henderson on returning to London from Canada. From London he emigrated to Australia. [Supposed?] to be written on Highgate Archway.'

[Below in Henderson's hand]

'Oh, scenes of my childhood,  
Haunts of my boyhood,  
Blackberry bushes  
All welcome home;  
Show forth thy graces,  
Oaks down to daisies,  
And with smiling faces  
Look glad when I come.

Ah! Why did I leave thee,  
The thought oft does grieve me,  
To wander afar  
O'er the dark rolling sea?  
But glad to return,  
O do not refuse me,  
The tear drop will start when I gaze upon thee.

Oh woods of Hill-Muswell,  
That name I know well  
Will awake many thoughts  
That all latent would lie;  
Glory be to thee,  
And all that surround thee,  
And a long preservation  
To old Highgate High.

The birds come to greet me,  
And flock round to meet me,  
And with their sweet voices  
They sing welcome home:  
Oh! Bless those dear creatures,



Whom God sent to teach us,  
Full many a good lesson  
We maid e'en they come.

But away to your homes,  
For the day is declining.  
The twilight o'ertakes us,  
And set is the sun;  
The moon now ascends  
In all his gay smiling,  
The glowworm shines youth  
And the bees lease their hum.

Then farewell once more,  
Though we part, we'll not sever  
One link of the chain  
That our friendship holds dear;  
Thy memory shall bloom  
In my bosom forever,  
And never lack moisture  
While I have a tear.'

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